

# THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Socialist candidates speak  
on Lebanon, minimum wage

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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

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MAY 13, 1996

## Lebanese resistance undefeated by Tel Aviv

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL

The governments of Israel, Lebanon, and Syria agreed April 26 to a cease-fire between the Israeli military and Lebanese resistance fighters. The unsigned "understanding," patched together with Washington's intervention, came after Israeli forces waged a 16-day bombing campaign that left much of southern Lebanon in rubble and displaced almost half a million people.

Despite overwhelming air power, Tel Aviv was unable to crush Hezbollah and other groups fighting the Israeli occupation of Lebanon. Armed skirmishes flared up days after the cease-fire began.

Under the agreement, Hezbollah and other armed groups in Lebanon are not to launch rockets into Israel, and Tel Aviv's forces will not fire weapons at civilians in Lebanon. The two sides in the conflict are not to target civilians or to launch armed attacks from residential and industrial areas — a charge the Israeli government made against Hezbollah. In an admission it will not end the fighting in Israeli-occupied south Lebanon, the understanding allows "self-defense" by either side.

The U.S., French, Israeli, Syrian, and Lebanese governments constituted a "monitoring group" to supervise the cease-fire. The agreement also calls for resuming negotiations between Tel Aviv

Continued on Page 8

## Steady work leads to sales of socialist books, press

BY SARA LOBMAN

Socialist workers who are members of the International Association of Machinists (IAM) in Toronto report that consistent political work on the job leads to sales of Pathfinder books and pamphlets.

"Over the past five weeks four co-workers at the Ford Electronics plant and at Arvin Industries have purchased *Episodes of the Cuban Revolutionary War* by Ernesto Che Guevara, three have become members of the Pathfinder Readers Club, and three got copies of the theses being discussed by Cuban trade unionists in preparation for their convention," said John Steele, a Ford Electronics worker.

The discussions around *Episodes* then led to sales of other titles, including *Understanding History*, *The Eastern Airlines Strike*, *Cuba for Beginners*, *Sexism and Science*, *Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay*, and *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State*. Members of the IAM in Toronto sold three Pathfinder titles in all of March, but in April they averaged that many each week.

Winning working people and youth to the communist movement is what the campaign to increase sales of Pathfinder books and pamphlets is all about. That's why it goes hand in hand with

Continued on Page 5

## Millions march in Cuba to defend the revolution

Workers celebrate start of economic recovery

BY ARGIRIS MALAPANIS  
AND BRIAN TAYLOR

HAVANA — Dancing to Afro-Cuban beats from drums and trumpets, singing, blowing whistles, and chanting, more than one million workers, students, members of Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces, and others marched here on May Day.

Similar actions involving hundreds of thousands took place in every provincial capital and other cities across the country. Pedro Ross, general secretary of the Central Organization of Cuban Workers (CTC), reported the next day that 5.5 million demonstrated throughout the island.

The 1,900 delegates from the congress of the CTC, which had concluded its working sessions the night before, led the Havana march.

"This day is ours. It belongs to the proletariat around the world," said Grisela Feyové, a production worker at the Dairy Complex outside Havana, who, with a bullhorn, was leading a contingent of 22,000 workers from the municipality of Cotorro. "We are here to show the Yankee imperialists we'll defend our revolution to the last drop of blood."

"This is one of the biggest May Day marches ever," said Carlos Sánchez, a foundry worker at the Antillana de Acero steel mill near Havana. "We all feel like

we're coming out of an impasse in the economy. We have more control. We can see the light of the dawn."

Sánchez pointed to the improvement in the sugar harvest this year as an example of a slight economic upturn that has boosted the self-confidence of working people. "We're up to 4 million tons. We're sure to make the 4.5 million goal," he said. Sánchez, 54, who has worked at the steel plant for 34 years, remarked that the five-year decline in Cuba's main export crop had hurt the morale of the workers.

"We now know we can make a difference," added José Isaqi, one of Sánchez's 2,000 co-workers who turned out for the march. Isaqi volunteered on several weekends in the last two months to cut sugarcane in rural areas.

Their group was nearing Revolution Square, filled with colorful banners, where waves of workers marched for hours past the statue of Jose Martí, Cuba's national hero.

Starting in the early morning hours,  
Continued on Page 6



Five million Cubans marched throughout the island to celebrate May Day and the beginning of a recovery in the economy. Above, Havana marchers show determination to defend revolution.

## Irish marchers challenge British rule

BY JOYCE FAIRCHILD  
AND PAUL GALLOWAY

DUBLIN, Ireland — Several thousand people rallied here April 27 to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the Easter Rising.

"At its heart... the Easter Rising was about asserting the right of Irish people to determine the destiny of this Ireland and to end British rule," said Gerry Adams, president of the nationalist party Sinn Féin. He addressed the crowd in front of the General Post Office, the site of the 1916 rebellion against colonial rule.

Sinn Féin banners from across Ireland, particularly from British-occupied Northern Ireland, were carried along the route. The "Free Pat Kelly" contingent led the march. Patrick Kelly is a republican prisoner in Maghaberry jail, near Belfast. After long denying him adequate medical care, London still refuses to release him despite the fact Kelly is dying of cancer.

In his speech, Adams said that 75 years of the partition of Ireland "has inhibited the social, economic, and political development of Ireland. Has the southern state fulfilled the vision of 1916? Look around. The answer lies in the massive unemployment, the poverty in rural areas, the families forced off the land, a health service unable to care for all of the people. Look at the inequality, the discrimination against women, against young people, against the poor and the homeless...."

"The northern statelet has, since its creation, depended for its survival upon a



Militant/Joyce Fairchild

Supporters of freedom for Pat Kelly and other political prisoners led Dublin march

permanent state of emergency. Normal democratic rights have never existed in that part of Ireland."

The Sinn Féin president explained his party's decision to participate in upcoming elections declared by London in preparation for June 10 peace talks.

"On May 30, Sinn Féin's peace agenda will be the alternative to the Unionist agenda of domination and partition," he said. "On June 10 we will demand our

place at the negotiating table. We intend on asserting the rights of our electorate and we will defy the British government's arrogant assumption that it can dictate to the Irish people who they should or should not elect."

Joyce Fairchild and Paul Galloway are members of the Amalgamated Engineering and Electrical Workers Union in Manchester, England.





## 800,000 strike in Sri Lanka

Some 800,000 workers on tea, coconut, and rubber plantations went on strike April 24 demanding a 10.5 percent pay increase. Sri Lanka is the world's largest exporter of tea. Government officials said the strike was costing the tea industry \$10 million a week. Tea and rubber crops account for almost 25 percent of the country's total exports.

"The strike is a tremendous success," said P. Anthonymuttu, a spokesman for the Ceylon Workers Congress, the organization leading the strike action. One tea trade official complained the strike was "digging the grave for the entire country."

## National strike called in S. Africa

The Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) called for a one-day national strike on April 30 to strengthen its demands for changes in the Bill of Rights of the country's new constitution, scheduled to be adopted May 8. COSATU is demanding the elimination of a clause that ensures the right of employers to lock out workers during a strike.

Some companies have urged a one-day lockout to retaliate against the strike action, while employers organizations claimed the strike would damage industry and investor confidence. The African National Congress stated April 23 that it "supported the right to strike in support of general demands and specifically to press for the removal of the lock-out clause."

## Chechen leader killed by rocket

Chechen rebel leader Dzhokhar Dudayev, who declared Chechnya's independence from Russia in 1991, was killed April 21 by a Russian rocket attack. "The tragic death of the first president of Chechnya has not broken the Chechen people, who are prepared to continue the struggle," said Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev, who reportedly has assumed Dudayev's role as the central figure in their fight for independence. Russian president Boris Yeltsin sent 30,000 troops in 1994 to crush the rebellion, which has left more than 35,000 people dead.

Yeltsin claims he wants to end the war, and has said he will lose his bid for reelection in June if the fighting continues.



Thousands of people rallied in Asunción April 26 to defend Paraguayan president Juan Carlos Wasmosy's dismissal of Gen. Lino Oviedo. Oviedo's attempt to assume the post of defense minister and his threats of a military coup were rebuked.

Nearly every day he has declared that the air war in Chechnya is over, yet daily bombing and shelling by Russian forces continues. "Boris Yeltsin says he is finally ready for peace," said Chechen military commander Aslan Maskhadov. "Then why is the war worse than it has ever been before?"

## NATO extends pullout deadline

Pentagon spokesman Kenneth Bacon said at a news conference April 25 that U.S. military commanders wanted NATO troops to stay in Bosnia past the pullout deadline of December 20, the anniversary of the arrival of the first imperialist soldiers there. Defense department officials said several thousand U.S. troops would remain in Yugoslavia well into January. U.S. president William Clinton has claimed that Washington's 20,000 GIs would be withdrawn by December.

NATO commanders announced April 23 that there would be no reduction in the 60,000-strong NATO force in Bosnia until at least September, when elections are to be held there. Previously troops were supposed to begin withdrawing in June.

## Czech group protests farm prices

Members of the Czech-Moravian Union dumped three tons of onions in front of the agriculture ministry in Prague April 25 protesting competition of lower-priced onions from European Union (EU) nations. Josef Krizek, a Czech legislator and leader of the organization, said farmers in the country will throw away 22,000 tons of onions in 1996 because excess produce from the EU subsidized farms are dumped on the market. Czech Republic officials complained that governments in the EU trade bloc also protect their domestic industries from Central European imports.

## Paraguay general pushed back

Some 5,000 people protested in Asunción April 23, after Paraguayan president Juan Carlos Wasmosy said he would appoint Gen. Lino Oviedo as the country's new defense minister. "Wasmosy, Oviedo: send them both to the garbage heap," the demonstrators shouted. The outrage forced Wasmosy to declare April 25 that he would not make the appointment.

Wasmosy, who had dismissed Oviedo as army commander April 22, embraced him only hours after the general threatened to bomb Congress and the presidential residence. Before returning to civilian

rule in 1989, Paraguay was ruled for 34 years under the military dictatorship of Gen. Alfredo Stroessner.

## Peasants revolt in Brazil

Brazilian state cops killed at least 22 people in a remote village in the state of Para, April 19, after opening fire on hundreds of peasants who were demanding land. According to the coroner's report, at least nine were beaten before being executed at close range. Some 2,000 peasants in southern Para began a march to Maraba on April 17 before the attack.

The Movement of the Landless Rural Workers had initiated a series of protests on April 10 focusing on the extremely unequal distribution of land in Brazil. The poorest 40 percent of Brazilians own a mere one percent of the land, while one-fifth hold 88 percent.

## Cops attack protests in the Dominican Republic

Cops attacked university students in Santo Domingo April 21 after a rally that was held to commemorate a popular uprising on April 24, 1965 that sought to restore the government of Juan Bosch. Bosch was overthrown by a military coup in 1963. The uprising, known as "The April Revolution," led to a military invasion of the Dominican Republic by Washington on April 28, 1965.

Meanwhile, residents of Los Mameyes on the east side of Santo Domingo, protested against the deterioration of housing and public services. The demonstrations came 22 days before the country's presidential elections. The cops threw tear gas against the protesters and set up a sentry to guard warehouses of the Esso Standard Oil distributors nearby. Col. Jorge Gil claimed that the measure will prevent acts of vandalism against the fuel warehouses.

## More attacks on Black rights

The U.S. Supreme Court refused April 22 to halt the enactment of a 1995 ruling by federal district judge Neal Biggers that ordered Black and white institutions in Mississippi to establish one standard for students seeking admissions to public universities in the state. The three almost all-Black universities, which admit nearly 60 percent of the Black students in the state, required lower test scores for enrollment. This measure was a way to compensate for the limited educational facilities in the high schools where most of the Black students come from.

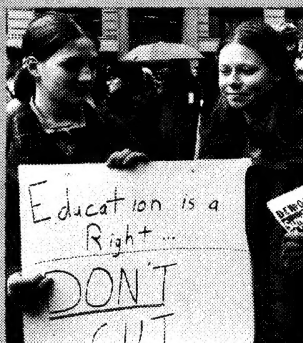
Black plaintiffs argue that the decision could cut enrollment in half at Mississippi's historically Black state universities, effectively locking many Blacks out of higher education. "This case is about closing the door for the mass of Blacks at the bottom," said Elias Blake Jr., former president of Clark Atlanta University and an adviser to the plaintiffs.

— MAURICE WILLIAMS

## THE MILITANT

### No to attacks on social wage

*The capitalist class around the world is driving to slash jobs, wages, and entitlements of workers and farmers as their economic system continues to plunge. The 'Militant' provides coverage of protests, rallies, and strikes by working people to defend our jobs and the social benefits won through previous struggles. Don't miss a single issue!*



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Editor: NAOMI CRAINE

Business Manager: NAOMI CRAINE

Editorial Staff: Megan Arney, Hilda Cuzco, Laura Garza, Martin Koppel, Argiris Malapanis, Brian Taylor, and Maurice Williams.

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# 'We salute those who fought Israeli army'

BY GREG MCCARTAN

NEW YORK—"Our campaign defends and salutes the workers and others in Lebanon who stood up and fought the occupying Israeli army, and who did not bow down to the incessant bombardment backed by Washington," said Laura Garza, the Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. vice president, in an interview here April 30.

"The cease-fire agreement does not address the central issue: that Israel must withdraw from Lebanon now!" Garza said. "It is Tel Aviv's occupation of southern Lebanon and the denial of Palestinian self-determination that propels fighters in Lebanon and among Palestinians to continue their struggle."

Local SWP candidates have spoken out on this question. Doug Douthat, running for U.S. Congress in Michigan's 12th C.D., condemned Washington's backing of Tel Aviv at the Militant Labor Forum in Detroit April 26. He spoke on a panel with Taimaa Hussein and Tina Farhat, who helped organize a walkout at their high school to protest the bombings, and with Rana Khraizat, a founder of the Michigan Arab Student Coalition.

In the interview here, Garza took up the minimum wage debate in Congress, which the Democrats are using as a way to gain electoral advantage over the Republicans.

"Workers aren't being offered a solution with the 90-cent increase spread out over several years, a raise that won't make up for increases in the cost of living since the last time the minimum wage was raised," she said. The officials of the labor movement—most of whom support Clinton—accept the parameters of the Democrats' plan, she said. "What we need is for the labor movement to organize a fight for a real living wage—union scale—more like \$12 an hour rather than a poverty level wage of \$5.15 an hour. This so-called 'debate' is nothing more than trying to get tens of millions of workers—in their majority young, female, and of oppressed nationalities—to think that this is the best we can hope for," she added.

Fighting for a livable wage must be part of the labor movement taking on the fight for "Jobs for All!" That is one of the central demands the Socialist Workers campaign places on the government, Garza said. "We can demand the workweek be shortened with no cut in pay to spread the available work, and fight for a massive

public works program to put people to work building the schools, roads, housing and hospitals we need," she said.

"The bipartisan agreement on the U.S. federal budget approved this past week registers another step in the chipping away at the social wage," Garza said, "in programs such as housing, health care, and education. But it does not contain the massive cuts the Democrats and Republicans were looking for. Even the leaders of the Republican freshman class acknowledge their so-called 'revolution' ran into resistance among millions of working people."

The assault by the wealthy owners of the banks, mines, mills, and land, Garza said, is happening with increasing intensity in every capitalist county. Garza pointed to the April 26 announcement by German chancellor Helmut Kohl that he hopes to freeze unemployment pay and salaries of state workers, reduce sick pay covered from employers from 100 percent to 80 percent, reduce unemployment benefits, and other steps that would amount to a \$33 billion cut in the federal budget. Kohl said the measures "demand that people adjust and lower their expectations."

Socialist Workers presidential candidate James Harris, who worked at the Hormel meatpacking company in Atlanta and is a member of the United Food and Commercial Workers Union, is on a two-week delegation of trade unionists from the United States to the 17th Congress of the Central Organization of Cuban Workers. He will participate in a massive workers march May 1 in Havana as well.

Speaking tours by the candidates will



Militant/John Staggs

Socialist candidate Doug Douthat speaking in Detroit against bombing of Lebanon

begin May 11 for Garza and May 18 for Harris. The candidates will join teams of supporters at plant gates, visit factories, present the socialist alternative on college campuses and citywide platforms, and hold press conferences along with local socialist candidates in the area.

The tours will build on the campaigning local candidates and supporters have already begun. Roni McCann, a button sewer and member of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE) in Cleveland, described a campaigning team outside the Joseph and Feiss plant where she works.

On the morning of April 12, several UNITE members and officials handed out flyers at the plantgate denouncing Republican congressman Martin Hoke for his position on labor issues. The leafletting was part of the AFL-CIO's \$35 million "voter education" effort. That afternoon,

Young Socialists and other supporters of the socialist campaign passed out literature for Harris and Garza and sold the *Militant* to workers coming out of the factory.

"One worker thanked a campaign supporter for the information," McCann said, "and related his story of voting in the last presidential elections. 'I spent an hour arguing with the poll worker who did not want to allow me to write 'None of the Above' on my ballot. I told her it was different than not voting at all and it was the vote I wanted to cast, and anyway isn't it supposed to be a secret ballot?'"

In a follow-up story on the AFL-CIO election efforts broadcast on National Public Radio April 25, a reporter ended her story by saying that of the three garment workers she polled that day, "One plans to vote for the Democratic Party, one for the Republican Party, and one for the Socialist Workers Party."

## 'Militant' announces new staff member

BY NAOMI CRAINE

With this issue, the *Militant* announces the addition of Megan Arney to the editorial staff. Before joining the staff Arney, 26, was a member of the United Steelworkers of America, working as a plater at Advanced Circuits, a computer parts factory in Roseville, MN. She was well known as a socialist among co-workers, selling three copies of *Episodes of the Cuban Revolutionary War*, as well as other Pathfinder books and the *Militant*, on the job over the last few months.

Arney is a leader of the Young Socialists. She took major responsibilities as a member of the YS steering committee in

organizing the group's first convention April 6-7 in Minneapolis.

Before joining the YS in November 1994, Arney was active at the University of Minnesota in defense of women's rights. She traveled to Cuba on an international youth brigade in January 1995. As a leader of the Twin Cities Cuba Network she helped organize and participated with other young people to go to Cuba for an international youth festival last summer. She was also involved in building demonstrations in the United States to oppose Washington's policy of aggression against the Caribbean island.

Arney wrote about the strike by United

Auto Workers members at Caterpillar after visiting the picket lines as part of a *Militant* sales and reporting team in February 1995. She has since written for the *Militant* on activities of the Young Socialists, from the organization's work in support of the Cuban revolution to defending framed-up socialist Mark Curtis.

In February she provided coverage of the congress of the Movement of Young Communists of France, which she attended as part of a YS delegation from the United States.



Militant/Linda Joyce

Megan Arney

## \$90,000 campaign fund gets under way

BY ELLEN WHITT

NEW YORK—Contributions are coming into the Socialist Workers 1996 Campaign headquarters here nearly every day, with more than \$4,500 raised. Supporters of socialist candidates James Harris for president and Laura Garza for vice president are organizing to raise \$90,000 by June 15 to finance the working-class and socialist alternative to

the parties of big business.

Funds will help cover the costs of upcoming tours of Harris and Garza around the country, campaign literature explaining the socialist program and the struggles fighters can join today, press work, and responding to new political developments in a timely way.

A big early boost to the fund came from supporters in Pittsburgh, who sent in \$1,800 noting that "this is just an initial collection from just a few people.... We should be able to raise much more from a lot more people."

Campaign supporters in each city are encouraged to adopt a goal for the fund-raising effort, and to get them into the *Militant* by Tuesday morning, May 7. Key to the success of the fund drive will be getting a broad number of individual contributors among unionists and on the job from co-workers, from students, and among activists involved in the defense of the Cuban revolution, affirmative action, and immigrant rights.

Noting that the Harris and Garza campaign will help young fighters meet the Young Socialists, Kim Kleinman in St. Louis sent a note along with his contribution, saying, "For many YS chapters as a result of this campaign!"

Harris and Garza supporters will be working to get as broad media coverage for the campaign as possible. Socialists in Washington, D.C., sent out a press mailing to nearly 100 U.S. and international media outlets as part of this effort. The mailing included campaign brochures and a

statement by the candidates condemning the Israeli bombing of Lebanon.

Campaign supporters in the Newark, New Jersey, area will be organizing the fund drive nationally as well as updating a weekly chart on the progress of the drive to be published in the *Militant*.

Contributions and requests for candidates to speak can be sent to the Socialist Workers 1996 National Campaign Committee, P.O. Box 2652, New York, NY 10009. Telephone or fax: (212) 388-1659. A four-page campaign brochure in English or Spanish can also be ordered at a charge of 15 cents per copy through the same address.

| Contribute to the Socialist Workers \$90,000 1996 Campaign Fund |               |              |
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|   | Goal          | Paid         |
| Birmingham  |               | 40           |
| Boston  |               | 210          |
| Brooklyn  | 7,000         | 5            |
| Cleveland   |               | 20           |
| Detroit   |               | 211          |
| Des Moines  |               | 150          |
| Los Angeles   |               | 277          |
| Miami   |               | 340          |
| Newark  |               | 5            |
| New York  | 6,500         | 197          |
| Peoria  | 1,200         | 0            |
| Pittsburgh  |               | 1,800        |
| Philadelphia  |               | 356          |
| Seattle   |               | 100          |
| San Francisco   |               | 83           |
| St. Louis   |               | 100          |
| Twin Cities   |               | 491          |
| Washington DC   |               | 150          |
| <b>TOTAL</b>  | <b>14,700</b> | <b>4,535</b> |

### Campaign for the socialist alternative! Contribute to \$90,000 campaign fund!

- ☐ Sign me up as a Young Socialist for Harris and Garza. I want to campaign for the socialist alternative and against the parties of exploitation, racism, and war.
- ☐ Sign me up as a campaign supporter and keep me informed of protests, picket lines, and other political activities.
- ☐ Enclosed is a \$ \_\_\_\_\_ contribution
- ☐ I want to invite a candidate to speak at my union, school, or organization
- ☐ Enclosed is \$10 for a 12-week subscription to the *Militant*, a socialist newsweekly, or \$6 for 4 months of *Perspectiva Mundial* in Spanish

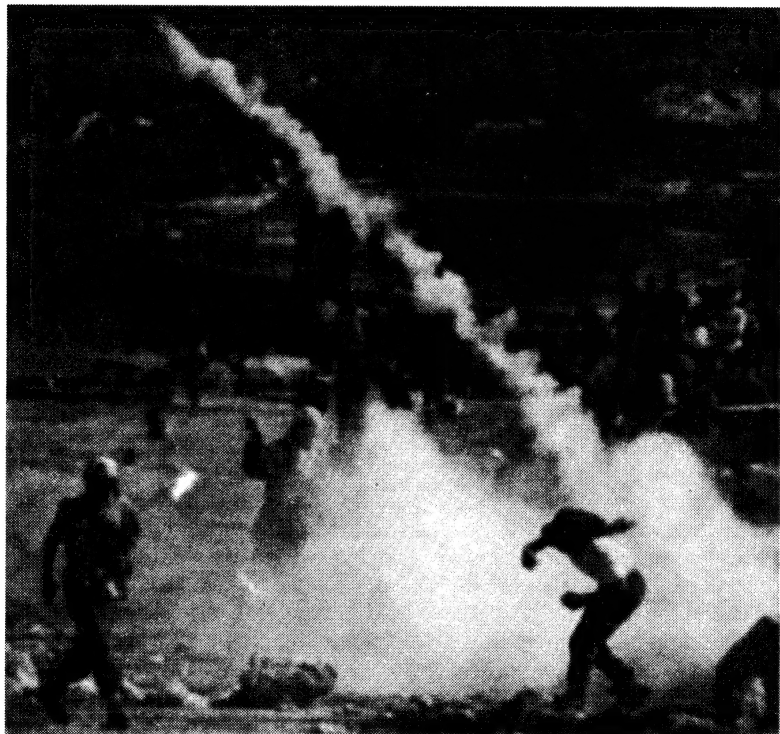
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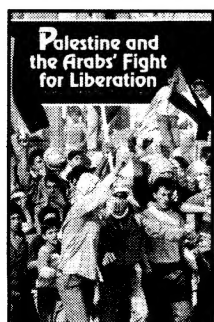
# BOOKS FROM PATHFINDER ON THE MIDDLE EAST

UNDERSTAND THE ISSUES BEHIND THE CONFLICT



Palestinian youth throw tear-gas grenades back at Israeli troops in East Jerusalem, March 1994.

## Palestine and the Arabs' Fight for Liberation



FRED FELDMAN  
AND  
GEORGES SAYAD

An overview of the Palestinian struggle from World War I to the beginning of the *intifada* in 1987. \$4.00

## U.S. Hands off the Mideast!

*Cuba speaks out at the United Nations*  
FIDEL CASTRO, RICARDO ALARCÓN  
The case against Washington's 1990-91 embargo and war against Iraq, as presented by the Cuban government at the United Nations. \$10.95

## Israel: A Colonial-Settler State?

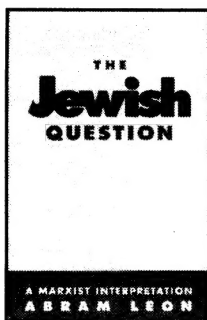
MAXIME RODINSON  
Examines the Zionist colonization of Palestine and how the State of Israel was formed. \$11.95

## The Jewish Question

*A Marxist Interpretation*

ABRAM LEON

Traces the historical rationalizations of anti-Semitism to the fact that Jews were forced to become a "people-class" of merchants and moneylenders in the centuries preceding the domination of industrial capitalism. Leon explains how in times of social crisis renewed Jew-hatred is incited by the capitalists to mobilize reactionary forces against the labor movement and disorient the middle classes and layers of working people about the true source of their impoverishment. \$17.95



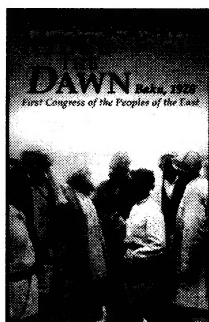
## How Can the Jews Survive? A Socialist Answer to Zionism

GEORGE NOVACK \$2.50

## To See the Dawn

*Baku, 1920—First Congress of the Peoples of the East*

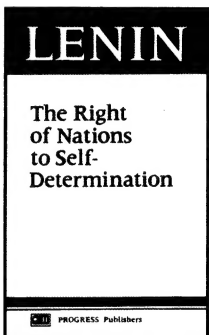
How can peasants and workers in the colonial world achieve freedom from imperialist exploitation? By what means can working people overcome divisions incited by their national ruling classes and act together for their common class interests? These questions were addressed by 2,000 delegates to the 1920 Congress of the Peoples of the East. \$19.95



## The Right of Nations to Self-Determination

V.I. LENIN

The working class advances and advocates the right of all nations to secede, Lenin explains, but it "values above all the alliance of the proletariat of all nations, and assesses any national demand from the angle of the workers' class struggle." Progress Publishers. \$4.00



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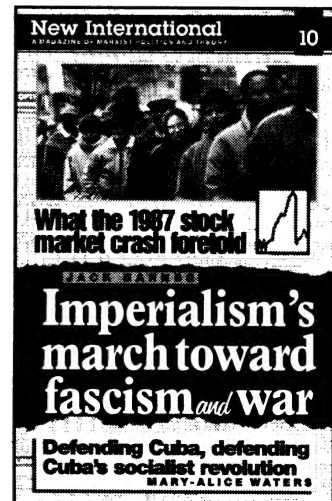
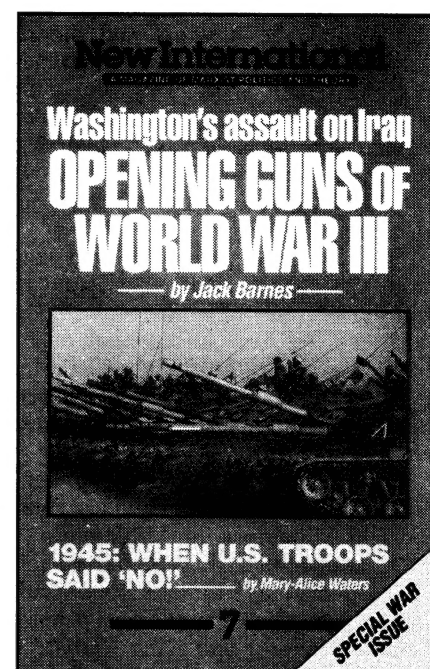
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# SELL THE BOOKS WORKERS OF THE WORLD NEED

## Join the campaign to sell Pathfinder books and pamphlets

### Continued from front page

convincing co-workers and other young people to participate in the Youth Exchange to Cuba this summer, protesting the U.S.-supported Israeli bombing of Lebanon, and signing up young people who want to hit the streets to campaign for James Harris and Laura Garza—the socialist candidates for U.S. president and vice president.

### Drive to sell 'Militant' subscriptions

To advance these long-term aims, supporters of the socialist press will carry out a five-week drive to sell new subscriptions to the *Militant* and the Spanish-language monthly *Perspectiva Mundial*, along with copies of the Marxist magazine *New Internationalist*. Many workers who have started to read Pathfinder books will want to get this kind of coverage, and those who become regular readers of the socialist press will in turn be drawn to read a broader range of Pathfinder books and issues of *New Internationalist*.

*Militant* supporters in various cities and unions are discussing goals for the subscription drive, which will run from May 11 to June 16. Next week's issue will carry a chart of the targets for the drive.

Pathfinder supporters in Ohio have found that working together with others to organize activities in support of the Cuban revolution provides a good opportunity to sell Pathfinder titles. Participants at an April 28 meeting at the University of Cincinnati to hear José Ponce, first secretary at the Cuban Interests Section in Washington, D.C., bought several titles, including *How Far We Slaves Have Come* by Fidel Castro and Nelson Mandela and

*The Revolution Betrayed* by Leon Trotsky.

"We sold 16 copies of the *Militant*, three books — *U.S. Hands Off the Mideast!*, *Malcolm X Talks to Young People*, and *Israel: A Colonial-Settler State?* — and four pamphlets at a demonstration of 300 in Canberra to protest the Israeli bombing of Lebanon," Joanne Kuniansky reports from Australia.

"Our table was swamped, a real part of the protest," she added. "Three young people signed up for more information on the socialist movement, including two young Muslim women who attend the university in Canberra. They wanted to know if we considered Hezbollah a terrorist organization. They really liked what Malcolm X had to say in the *Militant* article 'Rebellions don't explode politely.'" Hezbollah is a group in Lebanon fighting the Israeli occupation.

A young worker of Lebanese background attended a Militant Labor Forum in Brooklyn after buying the *Militant* at a socialist campaign table earlier in the week. He

April 28: 77%  
Should be: 93%

### Monthly Sales of Pathfinder Books

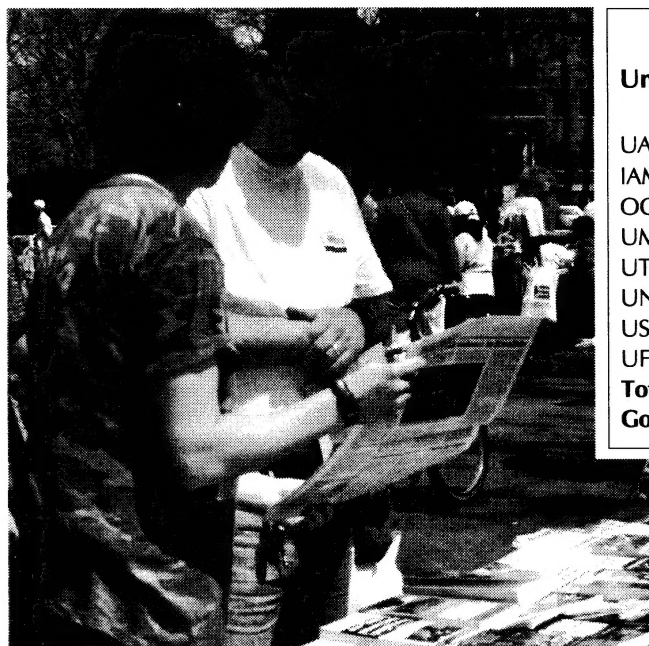
|                       | Through Pathfinder Bookstores |             |             | To Commercial distributors |              |            | Total       |             |             | Readers Club Membership |             |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------|-------------|-------------|----------------------------|--------------|------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------------------|-------------|
|                       | Goal                          | Sold        | % sold      | Goal                       | Sold         | % sold     | Goal        | Sold        | % sold      | Goal                    | Sold        |
| <b>UNITED STATES</b>  |                               |             |             |                            |              |            |             |             |             |                         |             |
| Los Angeles           | 120                           | 299         | 249%        | 95                         | 155          | 163%       | 215         | 454         | 211%        | 80                      | 65          |
| Detroit               | 77                            | 60          | 78%         | 60                         | 174          | 290%       | 137         | 234         | 171%        | 52                      | 44          |
| Houston               | 45                            | 41          | 91%         | 32                         | 63           | 197%       | 77          | 104         | 135%        | 34                      | 33          |
| Chicago               | 77                            | 35          | 45%         | 60                         | 120          | 200%       | 137         | 155         | 113%        | 52                      | 42          |
| Washington, D.C.      | 54                            | 56          | 104%        | 42                         | 37           | 88%        | 96          | 93          | 97%         | 37                      | 32          |
| Atlanta               | 48                            | 74          | 154%        | 32                         | 0            | 0%         | 80          | 74          | 93%         | 31                      | 38          |
| Philadelphia          | 63                            | 27          | 43%         | 49                         | 68           | 139%       | 112         | 95          | 85%         | 43                      | 36          |
| Seattle               | 80                            | 57          | 71%         | 60                         | 52           | 87%        | 140         | 109         | 78%         | 60                      | 56          |
| Greensboro            | 41                            | 18          | 44%         | 36                         | 36           | 100%       | 77          | 54          | 70%         | 36                      | 28          |
| Boston                | 65                            | 30          | 46%         | 50                         | 47           | 94%        | 115         | 77          | 67%         | 43                      | 37          |
| Salt Lake City        | 63                            | 28          | 44%         | 49                         | 44           | 90%        | 112         | 72          | 64%         | 54                      | 38          |
| Miami                 | 55                            | 20          | 36%         | 42                         | 41           | 98%        | 97          | 61          | 63%         | 36                      | 31          |
| Morgantown            | 32                            | 34          | 106%        | 25                         | 0            | 0%         | 57          | 15          | 60%         | 21                      | 19          |
| Brooklyn              | 165                           | 154         | 93%         | 130                        | 7            | 5%         | 295         | 161         | 55%         | 110                     | 63          |
| Birmingham            | 65                            | 38          | 58%         | 50                         | 24           | 48%        | 115         | 62          | 54%         | 43                      | 48          |
| New York              | 175                           | 102         | 58%         | 175                        | 80           | 46%        | 350         | 182         | 52%         | 115                     | 88          |
| San Francisco         | 95                            | 79          | 83%         | 74                         | 5            | 7%         | 169         | 84          | 50%         | 64                      | 69          |
| Cleveland             | 50                            | 33          | 66%         | 40                         | 1            | 3%         | 90          | 34          | 38%         | 34                      | 18          |
| Twin Cities           | 86                            | 56          | 65%         | 67                         | 1            | 1%         | 153         | 57          | 37%         | 60                      | 54          |
| Newark                | 171                           | 93          | 54%         | 133                        | 8            | 6%         | 304         | 101         | 33%         | 115                     | 97          |
| Peoria                | 36                            | 18          | 50%         | 28                         | 2            | 7%         | 64          | 20          | 31%         | 25                      | 16          |
| Pittsburgh            | 63                            | 31          | 49%         | 49                         | 2            | 4%         | 112         | 33          | 29%         | 43                      | 29          |
| Des Moines            | 45                            | 23          | 51%         | 35                         | 0            | 0%         | 80          | 23          | 29%         | 31                      | 28          |
| Y S convention        |                               | 74          |             |                            |              |            |             | 74          |             |                         |             |
| <b>Total</b>          | <b>1771</b>                   | <b>1480</b> | <b>82%</b>  | <b>1413</b>                | <b>967</b>   | <b>69%</b> | <b>3184</b> | <b>2428</b> | <b>77%</b>  | <b>1219</b>             | <b>1009</b> |
| <b>Goal/Should be</b> | <b>1800</b>                   | <b>1674</b> | <b>93%</b>  | <b>1400</b>                | <b>1,302</b> | <b>93%</b> | <b>3200</b> | <b>2976</b> | <b>93%</b>  | <b>1200</b>             | <b>1080</b> |
| <b>AUSTRALIA</b>      | <b>36</b>                     | <b>28</b>   | <b>78%</b>  |                            |              |            | <b>36</b>   | <b>28</b>   | <b>78%</b>  |                         |             |
| <b>CANADA</b>         |                               |             |             |                            |              |            |             |             |             |                         |             |
| Toronto               | 90                            | 70          | 78%         | 70                         | 41           | 59%        | 160         | 111         | 69%         | 60                      | 52          |
| Vancouver             | 36                            | 32          | 89%         | 28                         | 6            | 21%        | 64          | 38          | 59%         | 42                      | 47          |
| Montreal              | 72                            | 52          | 72%         | 64                         | 12           | 19%        | 136         | 64          | 47%         | 40                      | 36          |
| <b>Total</b>          | <b>198</b>                    | <b>154</b>  | <b>70%</b>  | <b>162</b>                 | <b>59</b>    | <b>36%</b> | <b>360</b>  | <b>213</b>  | <b>59%</b>  | <b>142</b>              | <b>135</b>  |
| <b>Goal/Should be</b> | <b>220</b>                    | <b>205</b>  | <b>93%</b>  | <b>92</b>                  | <b>86</b>    | <b>93%</b> | <b>312</b>  | <b>290</b>  | <b>93%</b>  | <b>142</b>              | <b>128</b>  |
| <b>NEW ZEALAND</b>    |                               |             |             |                            |              |            |             |             |             |                         |             |
| Auckland              | 40                            | 59          | 148%        |                            |              |            | 40          | 59          | 148%        |                         |             |
| Christchurch          | 16                            | 12          | 75%         |                            |              |            | 16          | 12          | 75%         |                         |             |
| <b>Total</b>          | <b>56</b>                     | <b>71</b>   | <b>127%</b> |                            |              |            | <b>56</b>   | <b>71</b>   | <b>127%</b> |                         |             |

### GOALS AND SALES FOR 'EPISODES' FEBRUARY 9 - MAY 1

Totals as of April 28

| City                 | Goal         | Sold         | %           |
|----------------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|
| Los Angeles +        | 125          | 129          | 103%        |
| Atlanta, GA          | 45           | 45           | 100%        |
| Salt Lake City       | 60           | 60           | 100%        |
| Twin Cities +        | 100          | 99           | 99%         |
| Birmingham, AL +     | 70           | 68           | 97%         |
| Seattle              | 80           | 77           | 96%         |
| Des Moines*          | 45           | 43           | 96%         |
| Boston               | 60           | 57           | 95%         |
| Chicago              | 60           | 56           | 93%         |
| Miami                | 50           | 46           | 92%         |
| Washington, D.C.     | 75           | 69           | 92%         |
| San Francisco +      | 120          | 110          | 92%         |
| Cleveland            | 45           | 41           | 91%         |
| Detroit +            | 65           | 59           | 91%         |
| Houston +            | 65           | 56           | 86%         |
| Newark               | 133          | 112          | 84%         |
| Philadelphia         | 60           | 57           | 83%         |
| Greensboro +*        | 55           | 45           | 82%         |
| Pittsburgh*          | 55           | 45           | 82%         |
| Morgantown           | 27           | 21           | 78%         |
| Brooklyn             | 130          | 100          | 77%         |
| New York             | 140          | 102          | 73%         |
| Peoria, IL           | 30           | 20           | 67%         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>         | <b>1,570</b> | <b>1,517</b> | <b>98%</b>  |
| <b>SHOULD BE</b>     | <b>1,550</b> | <b>1,488</b> | <b>96%</b>  |
| <b>AUSTRALIA</b>     | <b>20</b>    | <b>16</b>    | <b>80%</b>  |
| <b>CANADA</b>        |              |              |             |
| Toronto              | 56           | 56           | 100%        |
| Vancouver            | 45           | 43           | 96%         |
| Montreal             | 50           | 32           | 64%         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>         | <b>151</b>   | <b>131</b>   | <b>87%</b>  |
| <b>NEW ZEALAND</b>   |              |              |             |
| Auckland             | 35           | 40           | 114%        |
| Christchurch         | 15           | 12           | 80%         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>         | <b>50</b>    | <b>52</b>    | <b>104%</b> |
| <b>IN THE UNIONS</b> |              |              |             |
| UMWA                 | 7            | 7            | 100%        |
| OCAW                 | 60           | 49           | 82%         |
| UTU +                | 105          | 73           | 70%         |
| UAW                  | 110          | 64           | 58%         |
| UFCW                 | 12           | 6            | 50%         |
| IAM                  | 90           | 37           | 41%         |
| USWA                 | 60           | 24           | 40%         |
| UNITE                | 38           | 14           | 37%         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>         | <b>482</b>   | <b>274</b>   | <b>57%</b>  |
| <b>SHOULD BE</b>     | <b>500</b>   | <b>480</b>   | <b>96%</b>  |
| + raised goal        |              |              |             |

IAM—International Association of Machinists; OCAW—Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers; UAW—United Auto Workers; UFCW—United Food and Commercial Workers; UMWA—United Mine Workers of America; UNITE—Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees; USWA—United Steelworkers of America; UTU—United Transportation Union.



Sales at Earth Day in Jersey City, New Jersey, April 21.

spoke in the discussion to answer another forum participant who argued that the Israeli government was doing its share to establish peace. "They are occupying our

country," he said. After the forum he bought *Episodes of the Cuban Revolutionary War*. Pathfinder supporters everywhere should keep their eyes and ears open for news of book fairs and festivals. In Los Angeles they sold 100 titles during the Festival of Books. Some 50,000 people attended the April 20-21 event. Sales included 8 copies of

### Pathfinder books sold to Co-workers

| Unions                | Goal       | Sold       | % sold     | Readers Club |            |
|-----------------------|------------|------------|------------|--------------|------------|
|                       |            |            |            | Goal         | Sold       |
| UAW                   | 100        | 82         | 82%        | 70           | 49         |
| IAM                   | 71         | 48         | 68%        | 60           | 17         |
| OCAW                  | 50         | 23         | 46%        | 50           | 25         |
| UMWA                  | 5          | 2          | 40%        | 4            | 7          |
| UTU                   | 85         | 23         | 27%        | 80           | 36         |
| UNITE                 | 42         | 11         | 26%        | 26           | 7          |
| USWA                  | 58         | 15         | 26%        | 58           | 12         |
| UFCW                  | 12         | 2          | 17%        | 11           | 0          |
| <b>Total</b>          | <b>323</b> | <b>124</b> | <b>31%</b> | <b>289</b>   | <b>104</b> |
| <b>Goal/Should be</b> | <b>400</b> | <b>372</b> | <b>93%</b> | <b>400</b>   | <b>360</b> |

country," he said. After the forum he bought *Episodes of the Cuban Revolutionary War*.

Pathfinder supporters everywhere should keep their eyes and ears open for news of book fairs and festivals. In Los Angeles they sold 100 titles during the Festival of Books. Some 50,000 people attended the April 20-21 event. Sales included 8 copies of

*Episodes* and 21 other titles on the Cuban revolution. Participants also bought 4 copies of *The Politics of Chicano Liberation*, 7 copies of *New Internationalist*, and 13 titles on the fight for women's liberation. In addition, 20 people got copies of the *Militant* and two bought subscriptions.

With this week's *Militant*, we welcome Pathfinder supporters in Australia and New Zealand to the scoreboard.

The next issue will carry final sales figures for April sales, as well as totals on the effort to sell 1,550 copies of *Episodes* and win 1,200 members of the Pathfinder Readers Club.

## Social tensions sharpen in Mexico

### Continued from back page

fight to be reinstated. On March 1, a group of about 100 peasants and supporters protested the murder of 17 peasants in Aguas Blancas, in the state of Guerrero, and called for the resignation of governor Ruben Figueroa. The murders occurred last June, and a special prosecutor closed the case on February 27, exonerating the governor. When a video of the massacre was broadcast on Mexican TV, public outrage and a series of protests finally forced his resignation March 12.

### Cop killings of peasants

Just days after Zedillo's government cried crocodile

tears over the April 1 beating of two Mexican workers by police in California, the Mexican cops ambushed another group of peasants on April 10 in the state of Morelos, killing one and wounding dozens. The group of some 500 organized by the Committee of Tepozteca Unity planned to protest the building of a golf course on environmentally sensitive land in Tepoztlán. The governor of Morelos initially denied the shooting occurred but, after a videotape of the gun-toting cops was shown, he was forced to suspend four of them.

In the meantime, the official union federation, whose leaders are tied to the ruling party, has once again announced there will be no May Day parade, while nine of the federation's unions stated they would go ahead with one anyway.

As all this goes on, the Mexican army is stepping up its activities under the guise of fighting drug traffickers, with U.S. gov-

ernment cooperation. Washington announced it would provide 50 Huey helicopters to the Mexican army for the so-called war on drugs. One of the places the "war" is being carried out in is Chiapas, where indigenous communities are battling for the removal of the federal army from the area.

A communiqué from CONPAZ, a grouping of nongovernmental peace organizations in Chiapas, stated that the army has recently entered several communities, set up military detachments, demanded the names of all in the town, and raided properties all as part of the anti-narcotics operation.

Linda Joyce is a member of United Auto Workers Local 882 in Hapeville, Georgia, who participated in the Mexico City Bookfair in March. Militant staff writer Laura Garza contributed to this article.



# Cuba holds 'congress of workers in power'

BY ARGIRIS MALAPANIS  
AND BRIAN TAYLOR

HAVANA — "This was a political congress, a congress of revolutionaries... a congress of workers in power," said Cuban president Fidel Castro. He was addressing the closing session of the convention of the Central Organization of Cuban Workers (CTC).

The gathering of the country's nationwide trade union federation, which began April 27 at the convention palace here, concluded April 30. Then delegates and guests joined the May Day march.

"This was not a four-day meeting," Castro said. "The congress lasted a whole year." The CTC leadership issued the call for the convention on May 1, 1995. A series of union conferences were then organized in local areas across Cuba. Following these meetings, the National Committee of the trade union federation produced a document, referred to as the Theses of the 17th Congress of the CTC, that was discussed among union members.

Some 81,000 workplace meetings to discuss the resolution and to elect delegates were held from January 15 to March 15, involving more than 3 million union members. The CTC organizes 97 percent of the country's labor force.

Some 3,700 people attended the congress. They included the 1,900 delegates elected by workplace assemblies, 400 guests from Cuba, and 1,400 international observers from 197 unions and other labor organizations in 46 countries.

Francisco Durán, member of the National Secretariat of the CTC, informed participants that among the voting delegates, 54 percent were currently working in production or service jobs and the rest were on full-time for their unions. The average age of the delegates was 41, with about a third being 35 years old or younger. Nearly 600, or 31 percent, were women. Durán also noted that 311 of the delegates had participated in internationalist missions around the world.

Delegates were divided into six working commissions on the opening day, which took up the issues of employment and reorganization of the workforce, increasing efficiency in production and labor productivity, raising agricultural production, the structure of workers' wages,



Militant/Luis Madrid

CTC members in Aguacate, Cuba, discuss challenges in agriculture in June 1995. Fidel Castro explained the trade union congress was product of year-long process.

organization of the unions, defense of the revolution, and international solidarity.

The commissions considered thousands of proposals raised at the pre-congress assemblies and prepared 16 resolutions that were discussed, amended, and adopted by the delegates, building on the CTC theses.

During the last three days of the congress, delegates worked in plenary sessions chaired by CTC general secretary Pedro Ross, who also gave the opening report presenting a balance sheet of the work of the trade union federation over the last year. In addition to the national secretariat of the CTC, Cuban president Fidel Castro, most government ministers, and the entire Political Bureau of the Communist Party of Cuba took part in the proceedings with voice.

The first plenary session was devoted nearly in its entirety to discussing this year's sugarcane harvest and prospects for next year. The battle to reverse the drastic drop in sugar production, which fell to a 50-year low of 3.3 million tons last year from 8.4 million tons in 1990, had permeated the work of the unions leading up to the congress. Sugarcane production collapsed as shortages of fuel, fertilizers, pes-

ticides, and spare parts for cane-cutting machinery mounted following the abrupt end in aid and trade at preferential prices with the former Soviet bloc countries at the beginning of the 1990s.

In his opening report, Ross informed delegates that sugar production had just exceeded 4 million tons. By the end of the congress, that figure rose to 4.15 million tons, indicating that the nationwide target of 4.5 million tons will "probably be surpassed by mid-May," said Ross.

After delegates from Santiago and Sancti Spiritus gave lively reports on the success in meeting the quotas in their provinces before the CTC congress, Manuel Cordero, general secretary of the sugar workers union, proposed that delegates adopt a goal to increase next year's harvest by 800,000 tons. Following the enthusiastic response of most delegates, Ross said that 1 million tons could be considered a targeted raise for next year.

At that point, Fidel Castro intervened in the discussion and said a more precise assessment of the extraordinary effort by workers in this year's harvest was necessary before any goals are adopted. He said tilling land and planting for the next sea-

son was somewhat behind and that at least two provinces, Cienfuegos and Matanzas, were not on course to meet their quotas this year. The Cuban president urged a serious discussion on these points. "What is important is the direction we are going," Castro said, "not prematurely adopting goals, without all the facts in front of us, that can end up being unrealistic and demoralize workers if not met."

The delegates decided not to adopt any goals for next year's harvest and instead organize the unions in every province to help put together a serious balance sheet of this year's results by the end of May before proposing any local quotas.

Antonio Neto, president of the World Federation of Trade Unions; Inger Hagensen, general secretary of the National Trade Union Federation of Norway; Fang Jiade, vice president of National Trade Union Federation of China; and union officials from a number of countries read messages of solidarity.

Many of the international guests had a chance to visit various workplaces and talk directly with Cuban workers. Cuban railroad engineer Arturo Sánchez Iznaga took five rail workers from the United States on a late evening tour of the main Havana railway station April 28.

The rail workers from the United States learned that in Cuba each train has a minimum of a five-person crew. United Transportation Union member Joe Swanson from San Francisco, who has worked on the railroads for 30 years, described to a group of Cuban workers how the U.S. rail barons have cut crews on most freight lines to two people, leading to increased safety hazards and fatal accidents.

Kevin Robinson was one of two dock workers there from Liverpool, England. The members of the Transport and General Workers Union were on their first trip to Cuba, along with several other trade unionists from the United Kingdom. The two are among 500 dock workers fired by management in Liverpool for refusing to cross a picket line.

Robinson said they came to tell their story and learn from Cuban workers. "If capitalism has no boundaries, then we as trade unions make it clear we have no boundaries when it comes to workers' struggles," he affirmed.

## Millions of Cubans march to defend revolution

Continued from front page

contingents of members of the metal, electrical, food processing, agricultural, construction, transportation, and many other unions assembled at the center of the city. Other groups were organized from the municipalities and from mass organizations like the Union of Young Communists (UJC) and the Federation of University Students (FEU).

CTC leader Ross, opened a short rally at 9:00 a.m. to kick off the demonstration. The trade union federation, which organized the march, decided to dedicate the massive proletarian mobilization to the Cuban youth, he said. Ross introduced Victoria Velázquez, first secretary of the Union of Young Communists, who gave the main address.

"Tomorrow we will read how this day unfolded across the world," Velázquez said, "where many workers lack a future, where the future is uncertain."

"For all those workers who are not able to march today, for all of those proletarians who cannot raise their voices, the Cuban people will march united with them."

Ross and Velázquez were joined on the reviewing stand at Revolution Square by Cuban president Fidel Castro, other members of the Political Bureau of the Com-

munist Party of Cuba, government ministers, the newly elected members of the CTC's National Committee, and representatives of trade union federations from around the world.

Velázquez thanked the CTC for honoring young people in this way. "For Cuban youth, the workers organizations are the best schools of communism, which we'll never renounce," she stated.

As the next century approaches, the disparities between imperialist powers and the underdeveloped world widen, the UJC leader said, and the gap between the poor and the opulent increases.

In this world, where the struggle of humanity for a better future continues, Velázquez stated, the UJC calls on youth around the globe to join the World Festival of Youth and Students to take place in Cuba in the summer of 1997.

Among the topics to be discussed at the international youth gathering will be democracy, peace, the struggle for sovereignty, women's rights, employment, protection of the environment, and "how to raise our voices to condemn racism, xenophobia, and imperialism."

"In 1997 we will meet in socialist Cuba," Velázquez said, where "nothing has been impossible for Cuban patriots since we got rid of capitalism through a genuine revolution."

### Denouncing U.S. economic war

Some of the largest contingents at the march were organized by the Pioneers, Federation of High School Students, Federation of University Students, and the UJC. The FEU contingent was led by two tractor trailers and a truck full of young people who had just participated in volunteer brigades in agriculture. A large group of young soldiers from the Revolutionary

Armed Forces and the Youth Army of Labor, which works in agriculture, was also part of the youth contingent that followed the trade union columns.

"There are so many of us here today because we want to protest all the attacks against us," said Elsa Tavares, a language student at the University of Havana. "The blockade, the violation of our airspace. We want the world to know that we are for the revolution and for socialism."

Tavares was referring to the so-called Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act, also known as the Helms-Burton act, passed by U.S. Congress and signed into law by President William Clinton March 12. The measure tightens Washington's embargo on Cuba and legitimizes claims by capitalists abroad on property that was nationalized by Cuban workers.

"It's unjust," stated Marcia Hinojosa, a bank worker, referring to the U.S. law. "Why should someone who abandoned the country and the revolution come back after 37 years and say 'this is my house' and kick the person living there out? I was born in 1959, the year the revolution triumphed, and I'll defend it to the end."

"Socialism or death," "Long live May Day," and "Down with Helms-Burton" were among the many handmade signs. "Even with a thousand ignorant laws you can't crush the people" read another banner carried by a group of young people.

"Clinton delincuente, no conoces a esta gente," (Clinton, you criminal, you don't know our people) chanted a group of agricultural workers from Güines in Havana province.

Asked about Cuba's downing of two U.S. planes that violated the country's airspace February 24, Demetrio Guerra García, from the Güines group, said, "We'll do it 100 times again if necessary."

In fact, we should have shot them down in January when those *gusanos* [worms] from Florida flew over Havana to drop their poisonous counterrevolutionary leaflets on the people."

One especially popular float was carried by members of the Federation of University Students contingent: a cardboard casket, complete with body, that said, "Helms-Burton" on the side.

Also at the demonstration were hundreds of international guests, including delegations from the United States, Canada, Germany, Ecuador, Mexico, Argentina, Brazil, Costa Rica, South Africa, and Colombia. Many of these guests had been attending the 17th Congress of the CTC.

Throughout the march, contingents of union members carried signs showing progress they have made in their workplaces in increasing production over the last year and helping to put their country on the road to economic recovery. "We've surpassed our production target by 25 percent," said Carlos Rodríguez, who works at Frioclima, a plant making air conditioning units. "This is happening in many factories. So while relations with the United States have become more tense, our people are confident and calm."

Some 20,000 bicycle riders and hundreds of peasants on horseback closed the demonstration. Just ahead of them, a contingent of 500 Cuban athletes, who will take part in the Olympic games in Atlanta this summer, marched in uniform. "You know, those workers in Chicago started the struggle last century that came to be symbolized by May Day," said weight lifter Barbaro López, referring to the Haymarket martyrs. "We have simply picked up the banner on the front lines of the international working class."

Read the  
**Theses of the  
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# Campus meetings defend Cuba, build July youth exchange

BY JOSHUA CARROLL

NEW YORK — "What the U.S. Government Doesn't Want You To Know" was the subtitle of a conference on Cuba that took place April 19-20 at the Borough of Manhattan Community College (BMCC). Seventy young people attended.

Reggie Mason, a student senator and one of the main organizers of the conference, said, "Students here at BMCC and others in New York and throughout the country hold a wide range of opinions about the Cuban government and U.S. policy toward Cuba. But we agree on one principle: the necessity for a climate of intellectual freedom where an open exchange of ideas can take place."

The flyer for the conference featured pictures of two Cuban youth leaders, Iroel Sánchez and Maika Guerrero, who had been invited to be the keynote speakers at the event. Across each of their pictures was a stamp reading "VISA DENIED." This referred to the fact that the U.S. State Department had refused to allow Sánchez and Guerrero to enter the country to participate on a scheduled speaking tour of U.S. campuses, including BMCC.

Mason stated, "The denial of the visas underlines the importance of this event and what we intended to discuss in the first place: the truth about the Cuban revolution and why U.S. policy must change."

The conference included panels and discussions on the U.S. embargo against Cuba and the situation in Cuba today; traveling to Cuba on the U.S.-Cuba Youth Exchange; Cuba's internationalism; women in Cuba; gays and lesbians in Cuba; revolutionary leader Ernesto Che Guevara and the early years of the Cuban revolution; and many other topics.

Panelists came from a broad spectrum of backgrounds and political perspectives. They included Mario Medina from the Cuban Mission to the United Nations; Leslie Cagan from the Cuba Information Project; Ray LaForest, a representative of the Haiti Anti-Intervention Society; Teresa Gutiérrez from the National People's Campaign; Sally O'Brien, host of "Cuba In Focus" on WBAI radio; Rose-mari Mealy, author of *Fidel and Malcolm*; Mary-Alice Waters, editor of Ernesto Che Guevara's *Episodes of the Cuban Revolutionary War: 1956-1958*; and Lorena Gaibor, the coordinator of the U.S.-Cuba Youth Exchange.

All the panelists encouraged participants in the program to visit Cuba and ask Cubans all the questions on their mind. Francisco Amador, another student senator and a member of the conference organizing committee, read greetings sent to the conference from the two Cuban youth who were denied visas. The participants decided to send greetings back proclaiming solidarity with the Cuban people and to send a letter of protest to the U.S. State Department.

In their message, Sánchez and Guerrero encouraged everyone to visit them in Cuba as part of the U.S.-Cuba Youth Exchange from July 24 to August 6. The delegation, open to people aged 15-35, is organized by the National Network on Cuba. Participants will spend time in the provinces of Santiago and Guantánamo, as well as Havana, where they will meet, work, and exchange experiences with young Cubans.

Conference organizers are actively publicizing and recruiting others to go on the Youth Exchange. They are holding meetings every Tuesday night at 7:00 p.m. at BMCC for those interested in going to Cuba. These meetings discuss raising money for the trip, outreach to other campuses, and how to make the New York delegation as large as possible.

There are already some 20 young people in the area who have expressed serious interest in going to Cuba. Those who want more information on the New York delegation can call Reggie Mason at (212) 406-3980.

BY ALIYAH SABBAAZ  
AND STEFANIE TRICE

NEW BRUNSWICK, New Jersey — Students planning to visit Cuba in July as part of the U.S.-Cuba Youth Exchange organized an event here titled "Cuba: A Case for Solidarity" here at Rutgers University on April 25. Thirty-five people, mostly university students, turned out.

What is the status of women in Cuba? What is the situation for Blacks? Are there elections there? What will happen when Cuban president Fidel Castro dies? Those were among the questions the mainly Latino audience asked. Student groups sponsoring the event included the Livingston College Government Association, Student Action Union, and Latinos Unidos En Poder (Latinos United in Power) and a Mexican student group. Those attending heard brief presentations by Jane Franklin, an author on Cuba; Bob Guild, a coordinator of the New Jersey Network on Cuba; Laura Garza, Socialist Workers candidate for vice president of the United States; and Lorena Gaibor, a coordinator of the U.S.-Cuban Youth Exchange.

Panelists described the conditions that sparked change throughout the years leading up to the 1959 revolution and the role of the U.S. government in dominating and exploiting the island. They discussed the impact of Washington's hostility, including the recent law passed tightening the U.S. government's embargo. Gaibor spoke about the importance of seeing Cuba firsthand and experiencing the Cuban revolution.

One youth expressed concern that the Cuban people no longer were following a vow made by Fidel Castro that "Cuba will never adopt capitalist methods."

"I see Cuba looking too much abroad for survival, rather than developing its own self-sufficiency," he said, pointing to joint ventures in tourism and other measures. Guild noted that the Cuban president said in recent speeches that Cuba was forced to introduce measures they would rather not have to rely on, like tourism.

Garza said Havana is importing almost 75 percent less of what it was able to purchase since the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the fall of the Stalinist regimes in the former Soviet bloc countries. The Cuban government had to adopt some measures to get the economy going, including allowing greater foreign investment. But the working class remains in charge and sets the rules. She cited the refusal of Cuba's workers to allow investors to hire only people under 35, or to exclude Blacks, as some investors have tried. "The Cuban working class sets the terms and they remain in charge," the vice presidential candidate stated. "The resources gained from these investments are used to provide the social gains of the revolution, like medical care and education for all."

One person asked if it was true that most of the Cubans who fought in Angola were Black, and what is being done today in order to fight racism. Franklin said that in Cuba the phrase "African blood is in our veins" is used to signify the fact that the majority of Cubans see themselves as descendants of Africans, and noted the pride with which Cubans view their role in defeating the apartheid regime when it invaded Angola. Garza noted that all Cubans who went to Angola volunteered to do so. The measures Cuba took outlawing racist practices also mean Afro-Cubans are among those with the greatest stake in the victory of socialism, she said.

The question of whether or not new leadership in Cuba had developed to a point where the revolution could still survive in the event of Castro's death was met with a resounding "yes" by people who had been to Cuba and spoken with youth there.

Gaibor explained that in going to Cuba participants will have the opportunity to speak with many of these youth and learn for themselves the reality of Cuba. "Part of



From left, Socialist Workers candidate Laura Garza, New Jersey Network on Cuba leader Bob Guild, Latino Student Coalition cochair Christain Estévez, and author Jane Franklin at April 25 Rutgers University meeting in New Jersey.

what we'll be doing when we get back is publishing articles and doing speaking events to tell people what we learned through our discussions there," she said. Eight youth signed up at the meeting to participate in the July trip to Cuba.



BY RONI MCCANN

CINCINNATI, Ohio — Nearly 100 people, many of them young, filled a hall at the University of Cincinnati April 28 to hear José Ponce, first secretary at the Cuban Interests Section in Washington, D.C. Ponce has also served as first secretary of the Cuban embassy in Angola.

"This was the first time I've had the chance to hear a representative from Cuba, which I have always wanted to do, and I really liked what he had to say," said Chris Wilson, a member of the United African Organization on campus.

After a brief presentation highlighting conditions in Cuba both prior to the 1959 revolution and now, as well as recent U.S. government aggressions toward Cuba, the meeting was open to questions and comments. Many hands were raised during the entire period and several people prefaced their questions by thanking Ponce for his visit. Some commented on the shooting down of two planes by the Cuban government in February. One supporter of the revolution asked if there wasn't another way the Cuban government could have forced the planes down without killing anyone, arguing that the shootdown "guaranteed the passage of the Helms-Burton act," which tightens Washington's embargo against revolutionary Cuba.

"The ideal situation would have been for them to heed the warning and simply turn around without further risk," Ponce said. "They chose not to and now the rest is history." He pointed out that "civilian planes with military usage" such as those downed by Havana have been used many times in the past against Cuba, including in the Bay of Pigs invasion in 1961.

Several people in the audience were openly hostile to the Cuban revolution. All were given an opportunity to speak and each question was answered. In response to one comment accusing the Cuban government of repression, Ponce reviewed the facts. "There are no disappeared persons,

no missing persons, none of the torture and murder that is carried out by the governments of many of this country's best allies. So why the accusations against us? Because we are independent, sovereign, and we say no to the U.S. government."

"Well, if that is the price, we'll pay it!" the Cuban official said to applause.

Ponce's visit was sponsored by the People in Solidarity with Cuba and the Central America Task Force. "This has been the best, most informative, and most orderly discussion I've had the privilege of attending on this subject," said Bruce Levine in his closing remarks following the two-hour meeting. Levine, professor of history at the university, moderated the event.

In addition to the campus meeting, Ponce was the guest of honor at a private reception April 27; had a breakfast meeting with Dan Radford, head of the Cincinnati AFL-CIO Central Labor Council; and addressed students in a classroom at the university April 29.

Ponce's visit here coincided with a campaign launched by opponents of the Cuban revolution to demand that Cuban diplomats be restricted from traveling to address public meetings. An April 25 letter signed by right-wing Cuban-American Jorge Mas Canosa specifically cited the Ponce meeting scheduled in Cincinnati as the kind of event Washington should bar Cubans from attending.

A State Department official told the Associated Press that a blanket denial of travel requests by Cuban diplomats would be met with reciprocal restrictions on U.S. diplomats in Cuba, implying that the Clinton administration did not favor such a move. The U.S. government did deny a request by Fernando Remírez, Cuba's chief diplomat in Washington, to travel to Columbus, Ohio, for a meeting with that city's mayor.

Following Ponce's meeting many people collected information on activities in defense of Cuba. One young woman who works at a homeless shelter here was surprised when Ponce said there were no homeless in Cuba. "Our government doesn't want anyone to think there could be a society like that," she said. Later she picked up materials on the U.S.-Cuba Youth Exchange trip planned for July so she could see Cuba for herself.

Get your application in now for the

## U.S.-Cuba Youth Exchange

July 24 - August 6

The National Network on Cuba is organizing a delegation of young people and students from around the United States for a two-week trip to Cuba this summer. The group will spend most of its time in the provinces of Santiago and Guantánamo, with a few days in Havana at the end of the trip. In addition to time spent working with Cubans, participants will visit factories, farms, historic sites, and other places of interest.

The Youth Exchange is open to people between the ages of 15 and 35. The cost is \$855 from Montreal, \$600 from Nassau, Bahamas.

Applications for the trip are due by June 1.



For more information contact:

**National Network on Cuba**

c/o Cuba Information Project

198 Broadway Suite 800

New York, NY 10038

Phone: 212-227-3422

Fax: 212-227-4859



# Tel Aviv fails to crush Lebanese resistance

Continued from front page

and Damascus and starting Israeli-Lebanese talks.

"This agreement is going to break down eventually," remarked one Israeli official quoted in the *Wall Street Journal*. "The question is how quickly?"

"This is a short-term agreement. It will solve problems for maybe the next three months if we're lucky," said Lebanese foreign minister Fares Bouez. He emphasized that the Hezbollah-led resistance will continue to fight "as long as Israel remains in part of Lebanon." Tel Aviv has occupied a nine-mile-wide swath across southern Lebanon since its bloody 1982 invasion.

Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah said his organization would abide by the cease-fire. But "what was decided today won't stop the resistance," he declared. "We have the right to defend our country."

According to an April 26 *Wall Street Journal* report, "Israeli officials conceded that despite over two weeks of intense shelling of Lebanese cities that drove 400,000 civilians out of their homes, the army had failed to greatly damage either Hezbollah's firing capability or its military infrastructure."

What's more, Hezbollah fighters have gained enormous stature throughout the country for standing up to Tel Aviv. "Hezbollah is fighting for our land," said Hussein Nehli, a resident of the southern town of Nabatiye. "We are all Hezbollah." Journalist Sarkis Naoum noted, "People see a sign of Lebanese dignity and Arab dignity in Hezbollah. Nobody else is fighting but them."

Hezbollah was formed in response to the 1982 invasion when thousands of revolutionary volunteer fighters from Iran went to Lebanon to help combat the Zionist army. The guerrilla organization is based largely among the Shiite Muslim peasantry in southern Lebanon. Hezbollah, whose declared purpose is to drive Is-

raeli forces out of Lebanon, has also won support because of its broad network of hospitals and low-cost social services in the country. The party has eight members in Parliament.

The Israeli onslaught and the resistance to it have forged a heightened Lebanese solidarity cutting across deep religious and political divisions. As thousands of people streamed back to their demolished homes in the south following the cease-fire, funerals for victims of the Israeli attacks turned into angry political demonstrations uniting Sunni and Shiite Muslims as well as Christians.

At the April 30 funeral procession for 90 people killed in the Israeli bombing of a United Nations refugee camp in Qana, in the south, thousands of mourners marched behind Muslim clergymen and Catholic bishops. They chanted "Death to Israel" and "Death to America" as the bodies were lowered into a mass grave.

"Now we have a common enemy," Assad Deab, president of the Lebanese University in Beirut, told a reporter.

The government of Israeli prime minister Shimon Peres is seeking to portray its military assault and the cease-fire agreement as a victory. However, as *New York Times* reporter Serge Schmemmann commented in an April 27 news analysis, "Israel emerged with its image tarnished by the terrible carnage at the United Nations camp and the impression that it waged a deliberate campaign against civil-

ians and economic targets."

Inside Israel, the government and big-business media have whipped up a patriotic campaign to garner public support for the war. Some Israeli Jews, however, were repulsed by the government's actions. "We're not supposed to make war on women and children," an elderly woman in Tel Aviv told a *Times* reporter.

Washington moved in to demonstrate its support for the Peres government and negotiate a cease-fire. The Clinton administration has barely bothered to hide its effort to boost Peres and help him win the close-fought May 29 elections, contested by the conservative opposition leader Benjamin Netanyahu. Clinton toasted Peres April 30 in Washington, where they signed an "antiterrorist" accord. The U.S. government agreed to provide the Israeli military with an early warning system to detect Katyusha rockets fired from Lebanon.

Syndicated columnist William Safire applauded Clinton for being even more pro-Israeli than his Republican predecessor. "The unwavering support shown by the United States after Israel was drawn into shelling Hezbollah rocket launchers near a U.N. compound stands in welcome contrast to the condemnation routinely heaped on Israel by Bush administration Arabists," Safire stated, referring to Clinton's refusal to criticize Tel Aviv for the massacre of civilians at Qana.

Meanwhile, the sniping between Wash-

ington and Paris over their intervention in the Mideast crisis continued after the cease-fire, which both imperialist rivals took credit for. U.S. secretary of state Warren Christopher was infuriated with French foreign minister Hervé de Charette's competing negotiating efforts. While Peres was clinking glasses in Washington, French prime minister Jacques Chirac invited Lebanese president Elias Hrawi to Paris.

The assault on Lebanon sparked deep outrage among Palestinians, including within Israel. In Nazareth cops fired tear gas to disperse hundreds of demonstrators who blocked the main street to protest the bombing. Residents pelted police with bottles and stones.

Meanwhile, the Palestinian group Hamas rejected the move by the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) leadership to change its founding charter, as it had agreed to do in the 1993 peace accords at the insistence of Washington and Tel Aviv. At an April 24 meeting in Gaza City, the Palestine National Council voted 504-54 to remove clauses in its charter that call for a revolutionary struggle to overthrow the Zionist state and establish a united, democratic Palestine.

"The Zionists are fooling themselves if they think the process of resistance and the struggle against the occupation will cease," said Hamas spokesman Ibrahim Ghosheh. Hamas called for "an intensified resistance against the Zionist occupation."

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**Israel Out of Lebanon — Stop the Bombing Now.** Speakers: Ayman Wishah, a Palestinian refugee from Gaza currently studying at Barry University, and Janet Post, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., May 10, 7:30 p.m. 137 N.E. 54th St. Donation: \$4. Tel: (305) 756-1020.

### MASSACHUSETTS

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**Oppose Resegregation of Boston Schools.** Panel discussion. Fri., May 10, 7:30 p.m. 780 Tremont St. Donation: \$4. Tel: (617) 247-6772.

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**Socialist Workers Campaign Rally with**

**SWP Vice Presidential Candidate Laura Garza.** Meet Minnesota SWP candidates. Sat., May 11, 6:30 p.m. reception, 7:30 program. 2490 University Ave. Donation: \$5. Tel: (612) 644-6325.

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### PENNSYLVANIA

#### Pittsburgh

**Why the Anti-terrorism Law is an Attack on Democratic Rights.** Panel discussion. Fri.,

May 10, 7:30 p.m. 1103 E. Carson St. Donation: \$4. Tel: (412) 381-9785.

### WASHINGTON

#### Seattle

**Report from Cuba by Participants in the Congress of the Central Organization of Cuban Workers.** Speakers: Mark Severs and Guy Blue, members of International Association of Machinists at Alaska Airlines. Fri., May 10, 7:30 p.m. 1405 E. Madison. Donation: \$4. Tel: (206) 323-1755.

### AUSTRALIA

#### Sydney

**Stop Moscow's War in Chechnya!** Speaker: Yavuz Çikar, North Caucasus Cultural Association. Sat., May 11, 7 p.m. 66 Albion St., Surry Hills. Donation: \$4. Tel: (02) 281 3297.

## Work continues to free Curtis

BY FRANK FORRESTAL

CHICAGO — Supporters of imprisoned union and political activist Mark Curtis have been reaching out and winning new support here over the last few weeks.

Curtis was beaten by Des Moines police and framed up in 1988 while participating in a public campaign to defend 17 co-workers from Mexico and El Salvador who were seized in an immigration raid on the meatpacking plant where he worked.

Curtis won parole from Iowa authorities last November, but remains in the Iowa State Penitentiary waiting to be accepted for release to Illinois, where his wife, Kate Kaku, lives. His application is currently being processed for the second time by the Illinois Department of Corrections.

Kate Kaku, defense committee coordinator John Studer, and committee activist Adam Gray attended a public Midwest regional hearing April 20 on "Control Units, Prisoners, and Political Prisoners," sponsored by a number of prisoners' rights groups in the Chicago area.

Studer spoke about Curtis and conditions at the Iowa State Penitentiary at a workshop on political prisoners. Numerous participants in the gathering were already supporters of Curtis's fight. Delbert Tibbs, a former death row prisoner in Florida who won his freedom after an international campaign, told Kaku and Studer he had followed Curtis's case for a number of years. Quentin Young, a prominent peace and justice activist in Chicago, said he sent a letter to Iowa parole authorities on Curtis's behalf last fall.

Jo Ann Patterson, the mother of Aaron Patterson, who is currently on death row in Illinois on frame-up charges, expressed her solidarity with Curtis and asked to meet with supporters to discuss the case further. Tony Valentín, son of Carmen Valentín, who has been imprisoned for 16 years for her efforts to win independence for Puerto Rico, also extended his support.

Curtis's defense committee is asking supporters to write to him and express their solidarity with his fight to be released. Letters can be sent to Mark Curtis, #805338, Iowa State Penitentiary, Box 316, Fort Madison, IA 52627.

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**What's a jackal?** — Britain's M-15 political police employs a psychic who has prophetic dreams about Irish Republican Army attacks.

*An Phoblacht/Republican News*



**Harry Ring**

of Dublin reports he dreams in symbols. When he dreams of dogs, it means the IRA. When he dreams of pigs, it's not cops, it's animal liberation activists.

**A fearsome threat** — Lech Walesa, onetime leader of the Polish union movement Solidarity, returned to the Gdansk shipyard as if to reclaim his old job there. Now an avid free-marketeer, he was defeated in his bid for reelection as president of Poland. His arrival at the shipyard in his chauffeured limo was apparently intended to frighten the parliament into approving a \$2,600 monthly pension for him.

**Good place to find the arsonists?** — Twelve of the federal agents who have participated in the racist Good Ol' Boys Roundups in Tennessee are Treasury Dept. cops assigned to probe

recent fires at predominantly Black southern churches.

**Praise the lord and pass the gruel** — In our depression-era neighborhood there was a flop-house where, to get a meager meal and a night's lodging, you had to attend prayer service and step forward to get saved. We were reminded of this by the proposal of Indiana Senator Dan Coates to skirt separation of church and state by enlisting religious outfits to package "spiritual" and material aid.

**Grabscam** — The Supreme Court ruled that when defendants agree to forfeit property as part of

a guilty plea they are not entitled to a court review of whether the government is taking more than authorized by law.

**All's well, and getting better** — "New government data shows that a greater fraction of the nation's workers lost their jobs during the economic 'recovery' from 1991-93 than during the bleak recession of 1981-83. And many more workers are joining unemployment lines because of permanent job loss rather than temporary layoffs." — San Francisco Chronicle.

**Pay more, get less dep't** — The main business of Ohio Blue

Cross/Blue Shield has been bought by Columbia-HCA, the nation's biggest for-profit hospital chain. The San Jose Mercury notes the gobbling of Blue Cross put Columbia-HCA "in the position of negotiating with itself....The concern is that both provider and insurer would emphasize savings over care."

**Isn't that hilarious** — An ad for Sauza tequila features a news clipping about a worker getting killed by a portable toilet blown off an upper floor of a building in construction. The snap line: "Life is harsh. Your tequila shouldn't be." Especially if your taste is as good as theirs.

# Chernobyl nuclear disaster still haunts region

BY JON HILLSON

MINNEAPOLIS — Tens of thousands demonstrated in Ukraine and Belarus April 26 to mark the 10th anniversary of the worst nuclear accident in history. In the preceding days, continued problems showed that the danger at the Chernobyl nuclear facility has not ended since the 1986 blast, which released 200 times the radioactivity of Washington's 1945 atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in Japan.

On April 23, fire swept through five abandoned villages near the partially crippled plant, where two nuclear reactors churn out energy. Flames spread through the highly radioactive 18-mile "exclusion zone" around the plant. Officials downplayed the spread of radiation, but local Greenpeace spokesman Antony Froggatt termed the wind-swept blaze "one of the major ways [radiation] travels, clearly a danger to the health of people, and not only in Ukraine."

On April 25, as demonstrators in radiation protection suits neared the zone at the conclusion of a 66-mile march demanding Chernobyl be shut down, nuclear waste leaked during a disposal operation. A CNN dispatch stated the leak caused 1,000 percent increase in radiation.

The April 26 demonstration of 50,000 in Minsk, Belarus, was attacked by the police. Belarus, which borders Ukraine, received some 70 percent of the fallout from the original disaster.

## Continued effects of meltdown

The April 26, 1986 core meltdown occurred during a safety test of the Chernobyl cooling system. The blast and subsequent inferno took the lives of 32 plant workers and firefighters. The final toll is far from complete.

While no accurate figure on Chernobyl-linked deaths exists, both the World Health Organization (WHO) and Ukraine's Health Ministry cite a figure of 125,000, in Ukraine alone, which is expected to rise to 200,000. In the region's contaminated zone — whose 54,000 square miles are equal to the land surface

of Denmark, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Switzerland — the thyroid cancer rate for children is 100 times the norm.

Cancers are not expected to peak until 2005. Leukemia, which develops slowly, has yet to emerge. A major increase in leukemia around Hiroshima did not appear until 1955, 10 years after the atomic bombing. Ukrainian biologist Vyacheslav Konovalov reports no slowing of the rise in the rate of multiple birth defects and pathological disorders in human fetuses since the 1986 calamity.

Floods around the Chernobyl plant, as well as seepage from "graves" of buried radioactive waste, have contaminated a lake 156 miles from the blast site, and now threaten drinking water for 9 million people, and irrigation and fishing sources for another 23 million.

Virtually all the meager Soviet-era pensions and programs for 800,000 "liquidators," who carried out the massive clean up of the blast site, and others ill from radioactivity, are long gone. The United Nations estimates 9 million people in the area suffer from the effects of radiation.

In the early March cold, the Ukraine government turned off the heat at Kiev's Center for Radiation medicine, the country's main hospital for Chernobyl victims, for unpaid bills.

The Belarus government, which states it has spent \$235 billion in Chernobyl-related programs, was recently denied the remaining \$230 million of a \$300 million lending package from the International Monetary Fund.

## Testimony of Chernobyl survivor

"On every floor of my building, people have died, and are dying," Sasha Sirota told 50 people at the University of Minnesota April 22, as part of a national speaking tour sponsored by Greenpeace. The 19-year-old former resident of Pripyat watched Chernobyl burn from his apartment in 1986. "American corporations

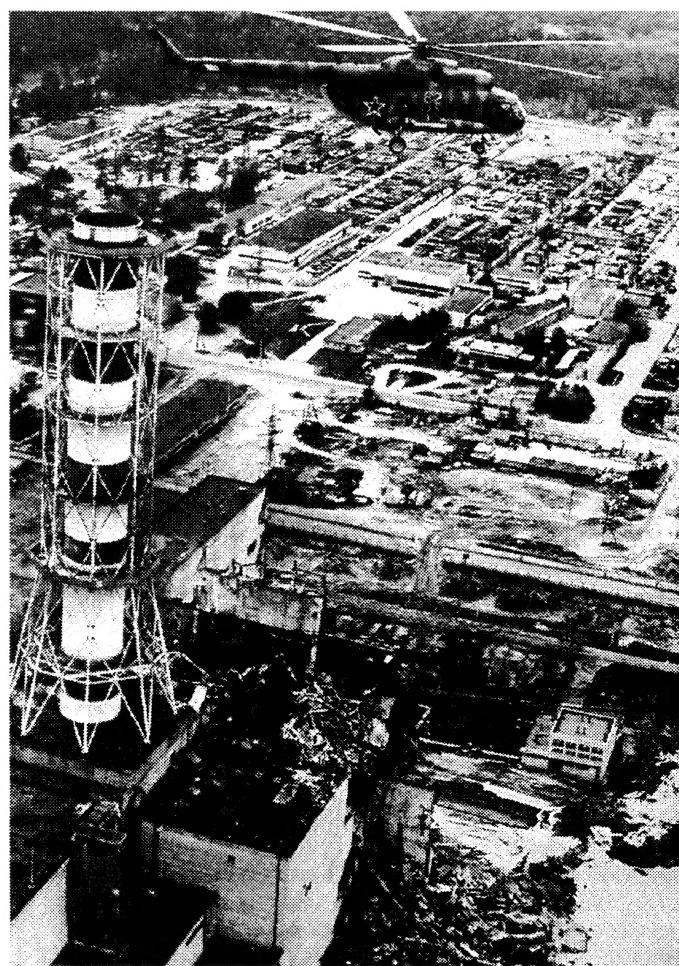
have a peculiar form of 'aid' for us," he said. "They come to Russia to build 'sophisticated' nuclear reactors. We don't need this kind of help."

Claiming he was "immeasurably moved" by a March visit to a Kiev hospital for children suffering from radiation, U.S. secretary of state Warren Christopher announced a \$10 million donation to Ukraine for a mobile radiation monitoring laboratory and medical aid.

This is a tiny sum next to the aid given by Havana to the victims of the Chernobyl explosion. Since 1990, Cuba has treated more than 13,000 children, and 2,400 adults in its Children of Chernobyl project at Tarara, a beachfront campsite donated by the Pioneers, a Cuban children's group.

Sirota had a chance to make the trip to Tarara, but gave up a likely spot, "so that someone sicker than I could go," he said.

There is intense pressure on the few spaces that open for the journey, the young anti-nuclear fighter said. "In my building in Kiev, a 'Chernobyl' building where 3,000 of us live, when a sign goes up for [the medical trip to] Cuba, everybody wants to go. Sometimes, the children of the bureaucrats get selected, not the sickest. This is a scandal. I don't think Cubans have knowledge of this."



Site of Chernobyl power plant soon after 1986 meltdown

Sirota has friends who have been treated in Cuba. "They loved it. They get fresh fruit, which they never get here. They think the camp is wonderful," he said. "Not like the Soviet camps we used to go to. They were like concentration camps, with military discipline. The children were very glad they went to Cuba. They get care they would never get in Ukraine. That is why so many want to go now."

# Iowa packinghouse closes, laying off 1,300

BY BARBARA BOWMAN

DES MOINES, Iowa — With a posted notice on the bulletin board near the time clocks, the Monfort Co. abruptly announced "a suspension of operations" at its Des Moines meatpacking plant here. The notice was posted on April 11, the day before the company shut down the plant. The company claims that it is losing money at Des Moines's largest manufacturing facility, where 1,300 workers are employed. The plant worked six days a week for most of last year. In recent weeks workers have often been sent home after 32 hours.

"Margins in the beef processing industry are very narrow, and the Des Moines plant is our least productive facility. We are losing a lot of money at the plant, so we've made the difficult decision to suspend operations, while we consider the plant's future," Monfort president Kevin LaFleur claimed in the notice posted in the plant.

Many workers at the beef plant are fairly recent immigrants from Mexico, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Laos, Vietnam, Thailand, Cambodia, the Sudan, and other countries.

City and state officials are scrambling to try to keep Monfort in operation. Des Moines mayor Arthur Davis is leading a delegation to Monfort's headquarters in Greeley, Colorado. In similar situations in this state in recent years, packinghouse bosses and other manufacturers have been given huge payments from the state to build new plants or to refurbish old ones. These payments have been accompanied by a demand for the unions to grant substantial concessions.

Workers at the plant gate commented on the impending shutdown. "They may be trying to change the name and reopen going with lower pay and no union," said Rich Bonwell, a United Food and Commercial Workers union member who has worked at the plant for more than 11 years. "After all that overtime we worked, it's hard to believe this place is losing money."

"They may be trying to tear up that contract we just signed," added Shelby who has worked at Monfort for eight years.

"For weeks we've been working on installing a new system for boxing," said Jack a worker in packaging, "and now it has a 'for sale' sign on it."

Diane, who was leaving her clean-up job, remarked, "I'm no spring chicken, I don't know what I am going to do now."

"They are trying to get the city to do what Monfort wants it to do," said Sheila, a United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) inspector. She was referring to the fact that Monfort is unable to dispose of the voluminous animal fat generated in the slaughtering operation and fabrication operation and has been making large payments to the city to get rid of the fat through the Des Moines waste water system.

In addition to the workers, small cattle farmers will also be hit hard by the closing, as a quarter of the cows raised in Iowa are slaughtered at this plant.

"It hits us in the stomach. We're just sick here," said Mark Williams spokesman for the Iowa Cattlemen's Association. "If the plant stays dark for any significant amount of time, it would be devastating to Iowa's cattle industry."

Barbara Bowman is a former member of United Food and Commercial Workers Union Local 431 at the Des Moines Monfort plant.

from Pathfinder

## What Working People Should Know about the Dangers of Nuclear Power

by Fred Halstead

A concise explanation of why the labor movement should demand that all nuclear power installations be shut immediately and why the disposal of radioactive wastes poses a danger to human beings for centuries to come. \$3

Available from bookstores, including those listed on page 8, or write Pathfinder, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014. Phone: (212) 741-0690, Fax: (212) 727-0150. When ordering by mail, please include \$3 to cover postage and handling.



# Israeli troops out of Lebanon!

The one certain thing that can be said about the cease-fire reached by the governments of Israel, Lebanon, and Syria is that it will not last. The agreement settles nothing because the Zionist regime remains at war with the Lebanese as well as Palestinian peoples. Working people the world over should demand that all Israeli occupation troops get out of Lebanon now, that Tel Aviv stop sealing off the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and that Washington end its aid to the state of Israel.

The Israeli regime has been unable to crush the Hezbollah guerrillas in Lebanon. Despite the ravaging of the southern part of their country by Israel's rulers, the resistance of Lebanese workers and farmers has emerged stronger and more united in face of a common enemy.

Recent events exposed the weakening of the Zionist regime, particularly the failure of its aerial bombing campaign, the reluctance to launch a ground war for fear of sparking greater opposition at home, and the international outrage at the Israeli massacre in a Lebanese refugee camp. Lebanon is Israel's Vietnam.

Tel Aviv's increased dependence on the U.S. rulers — reflected in Washington's intervention to put together a cease-fire — and concern in capitalist circles about the bitterly contested Israeli elections scheduled for May 29 are also signs of the regime's acute crisis.

Israel's capitalist rulers face another giant problem. It's not enough for them to secure the collaboration of the Palestine Liberation Organization leadership to police the Palestinian population in Gaza and the West Bank. It's not enough to get the PLO to exorcise revolutionary political perspectives from its historic charter.

That will not solve their crisis. The nightmare for the Israeli bourgeoisie remains the Palestinian workers and farmers — including those within Israeli borders, many of whom took to the streets to protest the bombing of Lebanon. Palestinian working people are unbroken and continue to fight to get the Zionist rulers off their backs.

This is why the fight for Palestinian self-determination — for a Palestinian homeland — is crucial. That fight, which registered partial gains with Tel Aviv's recognition of the PLO and a loosened grip on the West Bank and Gaza, will ultimately be successful only when the Zionist state is overthrown by a mass revolutionary movement, leading to a democratic, secular Palestine. As long as it exists, the state of Israel will be a permanent source of oppression of the Palestinians as well as a death trap for the Jewish workers living there.

Tel Aviv and Washington can hail a gutted PLO document. But they cannot eradicate the decades-long revolutionary legacy of the Palestinian struggle. "The partition of Palestine and the establishment of the state of Israel are entirely illegal, regardless of the passage of time, because they were contrary to the will of the Palestinian people and to their natural right in their homeland," the 1964 charter accurately states. "The Arab Palestinian people, expressing themselves by the armed Palestinian revolution, reject all solutions which are substitutes for the total liberation of Palestine."

That revolutionary legacy exists and will be reconquered by a leadership that will emerge from the ongoing resistance of new generations of liberation fighters in Palestine.

# Build youth exchange to Cuba

Over the last six months Washington has stepped up its aggression towards Cuba, intensifying its efforts to isolate the people of the island and keep U.S. citizens from hearing and seeing the truth about the socialist revolution there. With the recently passed law tightening the U.S. embargo, provocative actions by right-wing opponents of the revolution, and attempts to restrict Cuban diplomats and deny visas to Cubans traveling to the United States, the U.S. rulers are also testing the limits of how far they can go in attacking the democratic right to have an open and free exchange of ideas.

Opponents of the U.S. embargo against Cuba can respond by getting out the truth about Cuba and by taking Cuban youth up on their offer to host hundreds of young people from the United States on the U.S.-Cuba Youth Exchange this July.

Traveling to Cuba is one of the best ways to win youth to join the fight against Washington's attacks on Cuba. "Part of what we'll be doing when we get back is publishing articles and doing speaking events to tell people what we learned through our discussions there," explained Lorena Gaibor, a coordinator for the Youth Exchange.

The million-strong May Day march in Havana and congress of the Cuban trade unions demonstrated workers' determination to fight for the gains of the revolution and chart a socialist course, as well as their contempt for Washington's latest tightening of the embargo. These are the people Washington doesn't want U.S. workers to know — the proud, independent, sovereign, and revolutionary people of Cuba. That's why these are just the people U.S. youth should meet and see for themselves.

The deadline for applications to join the Youth Exchange is only one month away. Those organizing to go should get their applications in and begin fundraising for travel expenses, which are due July 1.

The best thing supporters of the Cuban revolution can do in the next month is get the word out about the exchange to as many youth as possible and help organize to get them to Cuba. Where there are students and young workers fighting the administrators and bosses, where there are fighters for women's rights, gay rights, and defense of affirmative action there will be youth interested in seeing a living socialist revolution. Let's sign them up to meet some of the people who filled Havana's streets on May 1.

# Shut down all the Chernobyls

The 10th anniversary of the Chernobyl nuclear nightmare is a reminder of the deadly hazards of nuclear power. The effects of the meltdown continue, including astronomically high cancer rates. Huge swaths of land are uninhabitable, including 25 percent of Belarus. More than 9 million people in the region suffer from the effects of the radiation. The cost has been an enormous burden on workers and farmers. And recent accidents at the portion of the plant still in use are warnings that it can happen again.

The response of the magnates of world capital and the Stalinist bureaucrats of the former Soviet Union has been to cover up the scope of the disaster and deny adequate care to its victims. As if to add insult to injury, U.S. secretary of state Warren Christopher recently offered a measly \$10 million donation to Ukraine for a mobile radiation monitoring laboratory.

In stark contrast, the revolutionary government of Cuba has offered a model of international solidarity, providing medical treatment to more than 13,000 children and 2,400 adults from Ukraine, Russia, and Belarus.

Chernobyl was the worst nuclear accident in history — one that could be repeated anywhere in the world. There is no known way to make nuclear power safe. It is inherently dangerous because it produces massive amounts of radiation that is extremely harmful and potentially catastrophic.

Even if no accident occurs at a nuclear plant, there is no method of safely disposing of the mounting tonnage of nuclear waste. For example, a nuclear waste facility that just opened in Aiken, South Carolina, uses chemicals that have generated large amounts of explosive compounds during the processing of the deadly material.

There is only one way to protect people from catastrophic accidents at nuclear plants, from the cancer and genetic damage caused by nuclear power, and from the growing accumulation of deadly radioactive waste that cannot be stored safely. Shut them down! Workers and farmers must take the lead in dismantling these facilities, as well as demanding the resources be made available to aid those affected by Chernobyl and other nuclear disasters.

# The Chinese revolution

Several readers have argued against the *Militant's* stance in defense of the Chinese workers state and for the reunification of China with Taiwan. These questions were also debated at the Young Socialists convention held on April 6-7 in Minneapolis. It helps to review what the Chinese revolution was.

In 1949 the workers and peasants of China threw the landlord and capitalist classes out of political power and began the transformation of property and social relations in China. The Chinese revolution established a workers and peasants government, and later a workers state.

Before 1949, China's population was some 450 million people, with more than 85 percent living in rural areas. Since the 19th century China had been fought

## DISCUSSION WITH OUR READERS

over and carved up by the rulers of Britain, Japan, the United States, and other imperialist powers. Capitalist relations became intertwined with the feudal forms of exploitation already in place.

Workers in the cities were brutally exploited and many peasants farmed as sharecroppers. The mass of peasants lived with starvation, illiteracy, and epidemics of cholera and other diseases. Women were doubly oppressed as the most exploited part of the working class and chained to feudal norms like prostitution and concubinage. An uprising by workers and peasants against these conditions in 1925-27 was crushed and the capitalist dictatorship of Chiang Kai-shek came to power.

In 1931 Tokyo's forces invaded China and set up a puppet regime in Manchuria. Chiang's regime put up an ineffective defense. The Chinese resistance to Japanese imperialism was spearheaded by peasants, workers, and students before and during World War II. The only political force that consistently opposed the occupation, and therefore won the leadership of the masses, was the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), whose central leader was Mao Tse-tung. The peasant armies organized by the CCP not only fought the Japanese, but also had to defend themselves from attacks by Chiang and his army.

By the time the Japanese were defeated in 1945, rebel forces had seized large areas of the Chinese countryside. Local governments in these areas, populated by some 150 million people, organized defense groups, coordinated policies, raised funds and supplies, and carried out other administrative duties. Land belonging to the big landholders began to be redistributed. From 1946 to 1949, 178 million peasants obtained land, beginning the abolition of the centuries-old system of landlordism.

In 1947 a full-scale war broke out between the revolutionary forces and those of Chiang. The CCP-led Red Army had forged deep ties to the peasantry, and in 1949 Chiang fled to the island of Formosa, now Taiwan, and set up a "government in exile." Those are the origins of the capitalist government in Taiwan today. A founding maxim for the revolution was for a united China, based on the history of struggle against partition by the imperialist powers, feudal warlords, and Chiang's dictatorship.

Mao at first did not outline a road to socialism. He maintained that there must first be a democratic revolution and then a socialist revolution. In this "two stages" policy, a Stalinist conception, Mao strove to collaborate with bourgeois forces, subordinating the interests of working people to preserving a capitalist regime.

In 1950 the Korean War broke out when Washington assaulted the revolutionary Korean forces. The U.S. Seventh Fleet was sent to the Taiwan Straits, and the U.S. Congress barred all trade with China, crippling China's economy. As U.S.-led forces marched toward the Chinese border, with the ultimate goal of not only conquering the Korean peninsula but taking back China for imperialist exploitation, Chinese troops mobilized by the millions to force the U.S. and its allies to retreat.

In this struggle against imperialist intervention the Mao bureaucracy was driven to break with capitalism. By October 1952 nationalization extended to about 80 percent of heavy industry, and 40 percent of the light industry. The state controlled 90 percent of all loans and deposits through the People's Bank, and state trading companies were responsible for about 90 percent of imports and exports. Peasant committees were reorganized beginning in 1950-51, participation rose and peasants played a more significant role.

The Chinese revolution brought a transformation of property and social relations to millions of people. Capitalism had lost the control and markets of one of the largest land masses and most populated countries. The nationalization of the major means of production, and imposition of a monopoly on foreign trade and economic planning constituted the concrete foundation of a workers state. The decisive gains made by workers and peasants continue to this day, especially in the nationalized property relations and the social consciousness of millions of working people.

The Chinese revolution represents a tremendous gain for the working class and fighters worldwide. To read more about this chapter in the history of revolutionary struggle I suggest some titles in the Education for Socialists series published by Pathfinder: *The Workers and Farmers Government* by Joseph Hansen, *Workers and Farmers Governments Since the Second World War* by Robert Chester, and *The Chinese Revolution and Its Development*.

— MEGAN ARNEY



# Need to demand jobs for all, not 'Canadian jobs'

BY MONICA JONES

STE.-THÉRÈSE, Quebec — The announcement April 9 that Paccar of Bellevue, Washington, was shutting down their Kenworth truck plant here has provoked a huge discussion across the province of Quebec.

"Kenworth will double production in Mexico," blared the French-language Montreal daily *La Presse* April 11. In the *Gazette*, the English-language daily, it was "Kenworth closing kills 900 jobs — Strike at Sainte-Thérèse truck

## UNION TALK

plant partly to blame." Since Aug. 8, 1995, 850 production and office workers, members of Canadian Auto Workers (CAW) Local 728, have been on strike for better pensions.

Faced with losing jobs and the media campaign against us, the union reacted immediately. In a meeting April 10, striker after striker rose to propose how we could fight back.

Since then, Kenworth strikers have gone far and wide campaigning to fight the company's layoff plans. We have blocked highways and had car cavalcades. We traveled to the federal capital in Ottawa and the provincial one in Quebec City, demanding government intervention. The biggest demonstration so far was held April 24 when over 400 strikers and their families filed by the plant.

Why is Kenworth closing up shop in Ste.-Thérèse? How can we continue to organize to defend ourselves against employers that throw us out of work? CAW president Buzz Hargrove says, "The real question for us as Canadians is, do we have the political will and guts to stand up to the U.S. in defense of Canadian jobs?" Buying into this nationalist framework, some strikers have carried anti-Mexican picket signs.

As a worker who stands to lose my job at Kenworth I don't see it that way. We need to forge links with U.S. and Mexican workers, not fight with them over jobs. Employers use borders and language to

divide us. They try to create competition between workers in different factories. We built our unions to overcome these divisions. The only effective way to combat unemployment is to fight for jobs for all—worldwide.

Last Tuesday, April 23, when strikers gathered to collect our strike pay we discussed these questions.

Roland Tison suggested, "We should all go down to Mexico and help them bring in the union. People in Mexico have nothing. Those that work have no health and safety protection. They are exposed to chemicals that cause birth defects."

"It's free trade among other things. We'll never know for sure," said Claire, an office worker for over 20 years at Kenworth.

"Charles Piggot is a big capitalist. For him it's all money. If he can make more money he'll go to Mexico," stated Lucie Robert. "It benefits workers in Mexicali but what does it give us? The company is playing a game. I think they intended to close all along. They let the strike go on so they could get everything in place in Mexico," she concluded. The Piggot family is Paccar's major shareholder.

I pointed out that it's not workers in Mexico or the United States who decide to close factories and go after our jobs and pensions. It is the bosses and their governments, of any nationality. And they are doing it more and more in today's depression conditions, where the capitalists in each country face sharper competition for markets where they can turn a profit.

Paccar, Kenworth's parent company, says the plant is being closed because of a 30 percent drop in orders. Their share of the North American market has shrunk from 19.2 percent in 1992 to 15.3 percent in 1995. They have stopped assembly work at one of two plants in the Seattle area, laying off half of the workforce, more than 800 workers. They cite the eight-month strike as a factor in the decision to close the plant here.

Our starting point as workers can't be whether the company is doing well or not. The bosses will always say one plant is more profitable than another to justify squeezing us more or as a way of convincing us we will be worse off if we fight.



Militant/Monica Jones

Kenworth members of Canadian Auto Workers Local 728 rally April 12 in Ottawa to oppose plant closing. The middle sign reads "Chretien, we want to build our trucks here." The sign on the right reads, "We want to eat something besides tacos."

Our interests lie not in saving capitalism, let alone a particular company, but in protecting the working class from the ravages of this system in its decline.

Our main strike demand to improve pensions starts to address the major problem of unemployment. If Kenworth workers were able to retire with a decent pension more would have done so. This would have opened up badly needed jobs.

Our CAW brothers and sisters who work at General Motors and Novabus are sympathetic to this fight for better pensions and to save our jobs. Workers at Firestone recently returned to work after a long strike that coincided with our own. They were fighting for relief from the long hours they work. We have allies among the unemployed and students who are also under attack.

But working people cannot win against the capitalist class factory by factory. The labor movement needs to fight for jobs for all, on an international scale. Rather than hoping the Quebec and Canadian governments rescue Kenworth — the Quebec government is currently discussing with

Paccar a proposal for loans to modernize the Ste.-Thérèse plant — we should demand they implement a shorter work-week, with no loss in pay. This would spread the available work around.

Unions need to champion the struggles of Quebecois, Natives, and other oppressed nationalities. We took a page out of Mohawk history when we blocked the highway, like they did in 1990.

We should find ways to stand shoulder to shoulder with our brothers and sisters in Mexico, and elsewhere in the world, such as calling for canceling the third world debt to the imperialist banks in Canada and the United States.

A working-class struggle along these lines can build the kind of solidarity that we will need to build a movement to overturn capitalism and establish a government run by the working class, run in the interests of the vast majority of humanity. It's the only way to stop for all time the likes of the Piggot family.

Monica Jones is a member of CAW Local 728, on strike at Kenworth.

## LETTERS

### Threats against Libya

The United States is openly planning a military raid on a Libyan underground chemical plant and the use of nuclear weapons has not been ruled out. I was stunned after I read the column by A.M. Rosenthal that appeared in the April 21 issue of the *San Juan Star*, the English-language daily published in Puerto Rico. It is difficult to remember a more open call for the first strike use of nuclear weapons than this article.

Rosenthal is a widely read mouthpiece of the interests of the U.S. ruling class. If my memory serves me correctly, he is a former editor of the *New York Times*. He says that except for nuclear weapons the U.S. has no weapon capable of destroying the chemical plant which he claims is to make poison gas weapons. The article states that the U.S. military is currently developing two weapons to destroy this plant.

Rosenthal himself admits that the ease with which he was able to get information about classified projects is evidence that the military planners wanted the information to be public. This is a trial balloon. President Bill Clinton and the Pentagon are watching closely the reaction to this and other articles because before ordering a military strike, either conventional or nuclear, they have to judge the political price that they will pay in the world. The higher the political price the less likely they are to use the weapon. The more we protest now the less likely is this act of imperialist aggression.

After reading this article I

thought back to the visit of Margaret Thatcher to Puerto Rico less than a week ago. Thatcher, the ex-Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, addressed a \$200-per-person dinner in San Juan. "The right ideals will not stop bombs and dictators," she was quoted in the newspaper. "We have to combine internationally to do more in areas of intelligence and in preemptive strikes." She did not mention Libya by name. The audience included top leaders of the Puerto Rican government and earlier she had had a private meeting with Gov. Pedro Rosselló.

Fortunately, not everyone in Puerto Rico welcomed Thatcher to this U.S. colony. The Nationalist Party released a statement that denounced her for her role in the war with Argentina over the Malvinas Islands and in Ireland. "She arrives in Puerto Rico to speak of privatization and neoliberalism, discourse akin to the politics of dispossession that handcuffs the poor countries and is totally foreign to the interests and needs of the Puerto Rican people," said the statement of the party.

The arrogance of the imperialists of the United States and the United Kingdom knows no limits. Both countries have carried out their wars with policies that maximized the loss of human life. The United Kingdom torpedoed the Argentine warship *General Belgrano* when it was sailing away from the Malvinas Islands. On the road from Kuwait City to Basra the U.S. military massacred Iraqi soldiers who were in full retreat and posed no military threat to the U.S. forces in the region. As the



rationalizations are prepared for the next use of nuclear weapons, the United States remains the only country that has ever used them in combat.

Ron Richards  
San Juan, Puerto Rico

### What are social relations?

In the March 18 and April 29 issues a question and a response are given around the meaning of "social relations" and its decisive bearing on the class nature of any state. The exchange revolves around the meaning of the term.

In reality social relations are the things that all producers and exploiters engage in every day of their lives and, consequently, are the things with which we have the most experience, they are the most common of matters. Marx explained that, "The history of humanity must always be studied

and treated in relations to the history of industry and exchange." Second, Marx explained that, "In acquiring new productive forces men change their mode of production; and in changing their mode of production, in changing the way of earning their living, they change all their social relations."

"The hand-mill gives you society with the feudal lord; the steam-mill, society with the industrial capitalist." Finally, Engels (as well as Marx), explained that, "Economics deals not with things but with relations between persons, and, in the last resort, between classes; these relations are, however, always attached to things, and appear as things."

Capitalism came into being, as Marx said, with the steam-mill which changed the way people made a living and hence their social relationship to each other. In turn, the steam-mill eventually led

to mass production industries which again changed the way people made a living and their social relationship to each other. With mass production industries we get the exhaustion of capitalism's contribution to social advancement and social relations, and the foundation for proletarian rule.

Based upon the growth of the productive forces (best epitomized by the mass production industries) a revolution took place fundamentally altering the social relationship between the workers and the capitalists after World War II in Eastern Europe. The workers then, and still now, won control of a larger share and decision-making power over the surplus product. This is exemplified, but only exemplified and not defined by, things like the wealth of society used to guarantee full employment, free medical care, and education.

This is a change in social relations, i.e. which class controls how much of the surplus product. This social relation has not been fundamentally overturned; the capitalists haven't been able to win back their previous degree of control of the surplus product which was based upon a different relationship of forces, a different social relationship.

John Votava  
Chicago, Illinois

The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of general interest to our readers. Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.



## Rightist campaign hits immigrants

### New Zealand politician pushes reactionary propaganda to divide workers

BY RUTH GRAY

CHRISTCHURCH, New Zealand — A campaign to "cut immigration to the bone" being waged by Winston Peters, the leader of New Zealand First, has opened up a sharp political debate in this country. In a series of large meetings around New Zealand on this issue over the last three months, Peters has raised his political profile substantially in this election year.

Peters, a former minister of Maori Affairs in the ruling National Party government, formed New Zealand First in 1993. He is one of the party's two elected members of parliament. A further three parliamentarians defected from the National and Labour parties in early April to join New Zealand First.

Rejecting accusations that his views on immigration are racist, Peters says New Zealand First is "color blind." The party's position, he told a public meeting of 600 largely elderly supporters in Christchurch April 11, is about "regaining ownership of the nation that generations of New Zealanders built, and which many even fought and died for."

Drawing a line between New Zealanders and "foreigners," Peters promotes his anti-immigrant policies as an answer to high unemployment levels and underfunded public health and education.

"People are flooding in by the tens of thousands to take the spoils while hundreds of thousands of people already here, including recent migrants, through failure in our education and training systems, economic devastation arising from scorched-earth economic policies and governments which do not care, cannot even earn a decent living for themselves and their families," he told a meeting in Dannevirke February 8.

Peters has gained support among a layer of elderly people, some of whom have formed organizations to defend their standard of living in the face of cuts to pension entitlements and health services. The national organization Grey Power has sponsored many of the meetings at which Peters has spoken.

New Zealand First has also attracted a hearing among some Maori people. Both Peters and fellow New Zealand First MP Tau Henare are Maori.

New Zealand First calls for limiting immigration to 10,000 a year. Immigrants would be subject to a four-year probationary period that would be reviewed yearly. The criteria for staying would be based on their "commitment and contribution" to New Zealand. After four years immigrants

could choose between permanent residency and citizenship. Only those who became citizens would enjoy the same rights as other New Zealanders.

Under New Zealand First, no overseas investment in real estate or farming in New Zealand would be allowed.

Immigration into New Zealand has increased substantially in recent years. Official figures show that 54,811 people were approved for residency in 1995 — almost twice as many migrants as in 1992. About 60 percent of the immigrants are from Asia, with the largest number coming from Taiwan.

Peters denies that his campaign is targeting Asian immigrants in particular. But at a February 13 Grey Power meeting in Howick, a suburb of Auckland where many Asian immigrants have settled, he focused on a group of Vietnamese who police allege are responsible for the theft of gold jewelry around the country. Peters blamed the government for letting people of "unsound character" into New Zealand.

#### Other parties back immigration limits

Prime Minister James Bolger, the leader of the ruling National Party, described New Zealand First as a "racist" party. Trade Minister Philip Burden said Peters' "insinuations and coded criticisms were clearly targeted at appealing to an anti-Asian sentiment which has sadly long been present in this country."

Despite their attacks on Peters, however, all capitalist political parties in New Zealand support restrictions on immigration and point to immigrants as putting strains on housing, education, health and other social services. For instance, Labour Party leader Helen Clark stated that immigration made New Zealand a more interesting country to live in, but "the numbers had to be adjusted to what New Zealand could cope with."

The National government itself — despite its criticisms of Peters — recently in-

troduced measures that target immigrants whose first language is not English. These new migrants now have to pay a NZ\$20,000 deposit that will be forfeited after one year if they fail a written and oral English language test.

On March 14, Immigration Department officials conducted an early morning raid on an Auckland house containing immigrants from the small Pacific Island country of Tuvalu. A number of residents were served with removal orders for overstaying their work permits. Tuvaluans caught up in the raid said they were "treated like animals." Emboldened by this atmosphere, racist attacks on immigrants have increased in recent months.

Peters has not been alone in campaigning for restrictions on immigration. Right-

ist groups such as Kiwis Against Immigration and the Government Accountability League have also become more vocal.

About 40 people attended a public meeting February 28 called by the latter group in Auckland. John Lehmann, the League's president, and Ray Cody, the founder of Grey Power, addressed the audience. Lehmann said members of the government were "traitors for selling our sovereignty" and that it was wrong to continue allowing immigrants in when health, education, and infrastructure services were overburdened.

Supporters of the Communist League protested against these views both outside and inside the meeting, receiving national media coverage for the organization's stand in support of open immigration.



More than 1,400 members of the United Steelworkers of America demonstrated April 15 outside an LTV shareholders meeting in Cleveland, protesting the building of a nonunion steel mill, TRICO, that is half-owned by LTV. Workers from all LTV-owned plants came by bus for the rally. The protest comes in the context of a wage reopener of basic steel contracts this year. The LTV reopener will be one of the first to be negotiated.

## Social tensions sharpen in Mexico

BY LINDA JOYCE

MEXICO CITY — The government of Mexican president Ernesto Zedillo is pushing ahead with deep austerity measures, selling off state enterprises to meet massive debt payments and abide by the conditions imposed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF). U.S. Secretary of the Treasury Robert Rubin announced

February 29 that Mexico had paid \$750 million dollars on the interest of the emergency \$50 billion bailout Washington put together last year. While Zedillo hopes to avoid setting off a social explosion, the skyrocketing prices and unemployment rate have deepened social tensions.

Over the past 14 months, the price of basic goods more than doubled, with inflation projected to run at about 30 percent this year. The first week in April the government raised the minimum wage 12 percent, but hiked the price of tortillas 27 percent. The minimum wage is around \$2.95 a day, with many in the countryside earning less than \$1 a day.

In line with conditions imposed by the IMF and the World Bank to service Mexico's debt of \$100 billion, more of the country's resources have been opened up to control by U.S. corporations. By mid-1994, the number of state-owned enterprises dropped from 1,155 to less than 150.

Even workers in better-paying jobs are feeling the pinch. At a Chrysler plant here, gleaming new Dodge Ram pickup trucks are lined up behind the plant, and look oddly out of place on the decaying street. Working at breakneck speed, the 3,000 assembly line workers are paid 550 pesos (\$73) a week for six days' work with no breaks except for a half-hour lunch. No women work at the factory in production.

Picasso Morales, a 26-year-old assembly line worker, said, "The crisis has affected us very much because everything has gone up but our salaries. Inside we've had to cooperate to reduce costs and they want us to work harder. Many of the new people can't take the pace of the work."

Eduardo Domínguez, 20, added, "But we know we earn three to four times what others can. Still, we have to do work on the side just to make ends meet."

#### Wide range of protests

At the University of Mexico students gathered in the School of Economics common area where banners adorn the high walls. One called for the abolition of child labor, while another one highlighted the resistance in the state of Tabasco to the environmental damage caused by the huge state-owned Pemex petrochemical industry, now in the process of partially being sold off to private companies.

Gerardo Lozano, 21, an economics major, explained that the university was continuing to cut enrollment. "For us students, everything is expensive. Looking at the future, I feel like we're in the mouth of a volcano." Last year 48 percent of youth earned less than minimum wage.

In the first week of March, daily demonstrations in the capital gave a glimpse of the impact of depression conditions on Mexico's population. Protests of 100 to 500 people occurred over the credit crunch for peasants, for safe drinking water, against the suffocating pollution levels, and against the drastic reduction in school lunches.

Sanitation workers from the state of Tabasco, illegally fired last July after they won an arbitration claim to be paid for the nine hours they worked every day instead of just for eight, are holding daily vigils. They have been beaten by cops and forcibly sent back to Tabasco twice, but have returned and are not giving up their

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## 500 rally to defend immigrant rights

BY TERRY COGGAN

AUCKLAND, New Zealand — Speaking at a rally here to protest attacks on immigrants, Freddy Li, who recently arrived in New Zealand from Taiwan, told a story he had heard from the United States. "A Vietnamese immigrant was murdered by racists. During the assault, he told his attackers he was sorry he had come to their country. Well, we are not going to apologize for being here."

This spirit of confidence and preparedness to fight back was shared by the more than 500 people at the April 25 rally, the big majority of them recent immigrants from China and Taiwan. Frank Shen, who came from Shanghai six years ago and who now is a production worker at a tannery organized by the Meat Workers Union, said he and others came to the rally to show they wanted respect. "Anyone should have the right to go anywhere in the world," he added.

Chanting "Stop Racist Attacks!", the protesters marched through the suburb

of Mt. Roskill, where in March rocks and other missiles were thrown at a house occupied by a family of Somali immigrants.

The protest rally was addressed by representatives of various immigrant communities, the local Labour Party Member of Parliament, and spokespersons for political groups. Speaking on behalf of the Communist League, Eugen Lepou, a packinghouse worker and member of the Meat Workers Union, said that the problem was not some supposed deep-seated racism among whites, as another speaker had suggested. Rather, the effects of the growing social and economic crisis of capitalism allowed rightist political currents to get a response when they scapegoated immigrants.

Events like this rally were important, Lepou said, because they gave working people of all origins an opportunity to create unity in action.

Terry Coggan is a member of the Meat Workers Union in Auckland.